

Indigenous or Citizen?

*Discourses of Indigenusness, Nationhood and
Development in the Conflict over Relocation of San /
Basarwa from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve,
Botswana*

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Vår 2005

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CHA	Controlled Hunting Area
CKGR	Central Kalahari Game Reserve
CUZ	Community Use Zone
DWNP	Department of Wildlife and National Parks
FPK	First People of the Kalahari (Kgeikani Kweni)
GIS	Geographical Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPACC	Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NT	Negotiating Team
RAD	Remote Area Dweller
RADP	Remote Area Development Programme
SI	Survival International ('Survival')
TGLP	Tribal Grazing Land Policy
UN	United Nations
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNWGIP	United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations
WIMSA	Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa

1. INTRODUCTION TO BOTSWANA AND THE CKGR CONFLICT

Introduction

The theme of this thesis is indigenous advocacy and the potential of the indigenous rights concept to challenge the homogenising citizenship of the post-colonial developmental state, for the benefit of Botswana's San / Basarwa minority.

I base my analysis on the conflict between members of the San / Basarwa minority and the Botswana government over the policy to relocate the residents of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) to government settlements outside the reserve. From the perspective of the Botswana government, the relocation is about the San / Basarwa's right to move to government resettlements where they can access services and become developed, integrated citizens. From an indigenous rights perspective it is a conflict over the San / Basarwa's right to stay on their ancestral land, and to the extent that it is possible and feasible, continue their hunting and gathering lifestyle without outside interference.

The NGOs and spokespersons comprising what I call the anti-relocation movement see the relocation policy as contrary to the interests of the San / Basarwa as culturally different hunter-gatherers, and indicative of a citizenship that serves to silence rather than encourage the participation of San / Basarwa in Botswana society.

My interest is concerned with the actors of the anti-relocation movement manoeuvre between the oppositional discourses of 'Indigenous' and 'Citizen'; to what extent they apply indigenism as a 'global' concept and whether they are involving or excluding the interests and representations of the post-colonial state. My aim is to consider whether the involvement of the anti-relocation movement has enabled the San / Basarwa to re-vision and re-negotiate their citizenship, and how the lessons learnt from the relocation conflict may be used to inform future indigenous activism.

This brings me to the following research questions:

- How do state discourses of post-colonial nation building and development articulate the San / Basarwa as citizens?
- How is the global indigenous rights discourse adapted to the southern African context, and how does the anti-relocation movement employ indigenesness to represent the San / Basarwa?
- Which subject positions are established for the San / Basarwa through the relocation conflict, and to what extent may they be said to enable the San / Basarwa to speak as indigenous and / or citizens?

Beyond my recommendations for future indigenous advocacy in post-colonial societies, my thesis can contribute in the following ways:

Firstly, the CKGR case is just one of many relocations affecting the San / Basarwa minority, but it is by far the one that has generated the most international (and as a result, domestic) attention. It is therefore a crucial discursive event, and analysing the conflict can provide insight that is useful beyond this particular relocation.

Secondly, my thesis is a contribution to wider debates over human rights and democracy in Africa. Since discourses that are considered “global” and “universal” are often seen to have a Western bias, it is important to provide a view from the periphery, to consider how local (in this case, southern African and Botswana) debates and concerns over citizenship, democracy and development serve to shape a ‘global and universal’ concept such as indigenous rights.

Diamonds, Development and Good Governance

At Independence in 1966, Botswana was among the five least developed countries in the world with a population of 600,000 - mostly agropastoralists. After almost four decades of experiencing the highest sustained economic growth rate in the world, Botswana is now ranked as a middle income country by the IMF and the World Bank (Aftenposten 26.03.02, Daily News 16.06.03).

Botswana's accomplishment in development is a source of national pride, and the country is considered –by outsiders and Batswana¹ themselves- as an exceptional case in African terms. The success is explained by diamond revenues coupled with good governance.

Debswana, a joint venture between government and De Beers, was established in 1969, and production began in the Orapa mine in 1971 and in the even larger deposit in Jwaneng in 1977. De Beers' Central Selling Organisation (CSO) has succeeded in keeping prices high and stable through stock buffering and has maintained a monopoly position in the market (Jefferis 1998).

Next to diamonds, the export of beef remains an important sector of the economy. The Tswana are traditionally pastoralists, so cattle are a symbol of the link to the past as well as the modernised export economy. However, with questions concerning the economic and ecological viability of intensive cattle production and the vulnerability resulting from excessive reliance on a primary product, tourism is now seen as the main sector of opportunity for economic growth and diversification (Saugestad 1998, Government of Botswana: National Development Plan 8 1992/3 – 1997/98).

The government's economic policy is generally presented as demonstrating “financial discipline and prudent economic management”², which means that income from mineral exploitation has been saved or invested in social infrastructure (such as roads, power supply, schools and clinics) and human resource development (such as public health and education) rather than used on direct spending. The national budget has consistently been in surplus, and large amounts have been placed in foreign reserves (Aftenposten 26.03.02, Daily News 16.06.03).

Alongside fiscal prudence and efficient development planning, another frequently mentioned component of ‘good governance’ is political stability. The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has been in power uninterrupted since independence in 1966, through nine free and fair general elections. While BDP sees this as a testimony to their competence, commentators have pointed out that development policies which follow the logic of ‘growth before redistribution’ and ‘stability before participation’ do not stimulate

¹ *Batswana* (sing. *Motswana*) means people or citizens of Botswana.

² President Festus Mogae's State of the Nation Address, 29 October 2001.

democracy and equality, and that those who have benefited the most from development are the elites themselves. Critics have labelled Botswana's mix of economics, development planning and governance "authoritarian liberalism" and "elite democracy" (Good 1996 and 1999, Taylor 2001 and 2002, Thapelo 2002, du Toit 1995).



Map 1.1. Botswana Political Map: Regional location and location of national parks and game reserves. (Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica. North arrow missing).

The San / Basarwa³

The San (in Botswana: Basarwa) are descendants of hunter-gatherer peoples who together with Khoe-Khoe⁴ were the first to inhabit the southern African region. Of an estimated total of 85 – 90,000 the majority live in Botswana and Namibia, but there are

³ Due to the contested status of San- / Basarwa, writing about ethnic identities and socio-economic relations in the Kalahari and Botswana is not a matter of straight forward presentation of facts. This section should therefore not be considered a neutral 'general introduction', but a synthesis of disputed and partially contradictory information.

⁴ Or *Hottentots*, which is the politically incorrect designation.

also groups in Zimbabwe, Angola, Zambia and South Africa. In Botswana, the San / Basarwa constitute about 3% of a population of about 1.7 million (the estimated number is generally between 48 and 50,000). Cassidy *et al.* (2001) list 16 different San / Basarwa ethnic groups in Botswana, with three different San / Basarwa language groups subdivided into several dialect groups (Hitchcock 1996, Saugestad 1998, Suzman 2001a, Sylvain 2002).

Most San / Basarwa live in small, mostly polyethnic settlements, some live on freehold farms and cattle posts, and some as squatters on the outskirts of villages and towns. Formal employment is extremely limited, but some are involved in labour intensive cash for work schemes as part of government's Drought Relief programme. Farm labour is common, but often takes place under poor working and living conditions. Among adults illiteracy rates are very high, particularly in informal settlements. Alcoholism, HIV / Aids and malnutrition are prevalent problems. The majority of San / Basarwa depend on government programmes for their livelihood, although foraging remains an important buffering resource. Hunting is highly restricted, particularly since Special Game Licences which were previously given to subsistence hunters have been eliminated. Because settlements tend to be small, many children are sent to hostels to attend school, a practice that has generated a lot of criticism within Botswana and internationally. Hostels are usually staffed by non-San / -Basarwa, and children are often met with hostility by non-San / -Basarwa students. Tuition is in Setswana and English, which alienates children with a San / Basarwa language as their mother tongue. There are stories of children running away from the hostel in search of their parents, and there is concern that the schooling offered at present serves to estrange San / Basarwa children from their culture (Cassidy *et al.* 2001, Hitchcock 2002, and discussions at the Research for Khoe and San Development Conference in Gaborone 2003).

In Botswana society, Basarwa experience racial and ethnic stigma. Hunting and gathering is associated with pre-modernity and primitiveness, and Basarwa are defined in terms of racial phenotypical characteristics such as yellow skin, small stature and large buttocks. Images of San / Basarwa also have their origin in Western 'scientific' discourses of race and ethnography (Hohmann 2003).

Recent anthropological studies have linked the plight of the San / Basarwa with their position as perpetual discursive others. For example, Saugestad (1998) shows how San-/ Basarwa identity is constructed as a set of negations of the Tswana norm; Basarwa are defined in terms of the (desirable) traits that they lack, such as livestock and villages. 'Development' thus becomes a question of correcting and supplying what is lacked. Motzafi-Haller (1994) points to the hierarchical binarisms that divide the Tswana – Sarwa relation into village-bush, culture-nature, developed-primitive, civilised-ungovernable *etc.*, which serve to reproduce relations of dominance and submission. Taylor (2000) shows that dominant representations of the San / Basarwa to some extent are internalised and used in representations of themselves, but that engagement with the dominant discourse also opens up for alternative positioning.

Use of the Kalahari Environment

Lee (in Saugestad 1998) describes the particular social organisation of hunting and gathering communities as the Foraging Mode of Production. Effective adaptation to the arid and unpredictable Kalahari environment necessitates mobility and flexibility in tune with seasonal variations and changing opportunities, and small groups which adhere to elaborate rules for sharing and reciprocal access to resources. San / Basarwa communities are often described as strongly egalitarian, relying on consensus-based decision-making and context-specific leadership, as opposed to the more hierarchical structure of Tswana polities.

G//ana and G/wi (the San / Basarwa groups with land claims in the CKGR) traditionally gather in bands on the pans⁵ during the wet season and split up into smaller family units in the dry season, when moisture is only available from melons and tubers. A band disposes of a traditional territory -the *Ngo*- for purposes of hunting and gathering. The *Ngo* contains the natural resources required to meet the long term needs of a band, and are self-contained ecological and economic units. Band membership implies access to resources within the *Ngo* and a responsibility for sustainable management. Even

⁵ The pans are remnants of a wetter climate. What were previously lakes are now shallow depressions covered with a layer of calcrete with clay underneath. The pans have high water tables and can retain surface water for some time after rains (CMI 1996).

though communities are no longer making use of the full extent of their traditional territories but what is termed the 'core territorial range' within these, the boundaries of the traditional territories are still well known and acknowledged (Albertson 2002).

The Politics of Naming

The politics of naming the San / Basarwa reflect a history of representation and oppression by others, as well as growing political awareness. The Setswana word Basarwa (singular: Mosarwa), which is used in official and common parlance is a category created by Tswana majority society based on cultural difference, socio-economic marginalisation and a widespread notion of inferiority. Mosarwa is said to be derived from *mo sa rua [dikgomo]* - those who do not rear [cattle]. The earlier usage of the prefixes Ma-/Le- instead of Ba-/Mo- signified powerlessness and sub-humanity, and the usage has been officially terminated (Cassidy *et al.* 2001, Ditshwanelo 2002c, Taylor 2000).

Remote Area Dwellers or RADs refers to the status of the clients of the Remote Area Development Programme of the Botswana government, predominantly San / Basarwa. *Batho ba tengnyanateng*, literally "those who live deep inside deep", is a Setswana adaptation of the RAD-term and is resented by the San / Basarwa themselves (Saugestad 1998).

Bushmen -derived from the early Dutch designation *bosjesman* and literally meaning people who live in the bush- is a more common designation internationally, and has been used in popular as well as academic texts. In Botswana it has been considered derogatory and has not been in official use since the 1970s, but Survival International uses Bushmen in addition to individual group names in its campaigns.

San is an international academic term, politically more neutral, but also less meaningful to the San / Basarwa themselves and within Botswana. It is used as an official term in Namibia and South Africa (Hohmann 2003, Hudelson 1995).

While studying the social position of Naro San in the Ghanzi area, Guenther (1996) came across self-denigrating designations such as *k'amka kweni*, meaning the 'mouthless people', or those who are incapable of speaking for themselves, dispensable and useless. However, there is a will to change negative stereotypes and self-images.

N/oakwe which means ‘red people’ in Naro (in opposition to black Bantu people) or simply Khwe which means ‘people’, have been suggested by the San / Basarwa –based organisations as collective terms to signal positive self-identification. Terminology is an important component of ethno-political mobilisation, and is actively negotiated (Lane 1998, Mmegi 08.02.02, Saugestad 1998).

I am using San / Basarwa juxtaposed in this thesis. Stylistically it may not work very well and one might argue that when analysing identity politics in Botswana I should employ the most used local term. However, since I am a foreigner and uncomfortable with the connotations of Basarwa in Botswana society, I decided to use it alongside the international academic term San. N/oakwe or any of the other proposed common names are not well enough established for someone without authority (again, an outsider like myself) to use. When writing with a regional perspective, I’m using San by itself or Khoe-San when I’m referring to the indigenous peoples of the southern African region in totality.

Background to the CKGR Conflict

Kalahari Settlement History

Hunter-gatherers have occupied the Central Kalahari for tens of thousands of years, and agro-pastoralists from the 1st millennium AD. According to oral history, G/wi and G//ana⁶ San and Boolongwe Bakgaligadi groups have resided in the Central Kalahari for many generations. Both San / Basarwa and Bakgaligadi lived as nomadic hunter-gatherers, but the Bakgaligadi may also have been horticulturalists (Cassidy et al. 2001, Hitchcock 2002, Saugestad 1998, Solway and Lee 1992, Suzman 2001).

A period of political instability in southern Africa (referred to as The Difaqane), led to extensive migration of Tswana groups who had previously concentrated in the south-western part of today’s Botswana into the Kalahari from the early 1800s. Other Bantu groups such as Hambukushu, Bakalanga, and Ovaherero followed. The immigrant

⁶ Several different spellings of these terms occur: Survival International uses Gwi and Gana (a modified version of the IPA system’s G/wi and G//ana) in their campaign material, Ramsay (The Midweek Sun April/May 2002) uses Gwikwe and Gannakwe, Cassidy *et al.* (2001) use Dxana and Dcui (following Nguni orthography).

tribes were more sedentary, they brought goats, sheep and dogs and were more socially organised and stratified (Saugestad 1998, Solway and Lee 1992, Thapelo 2002).

According to Solway and Lee (1992)⁷, the Bakgalagadi represented a link between San / Basarwa and other groups, through trade networks and payment of tribute to chiefs of dominant Tswana tribes such as Bamangwato and Bakwena. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Bakwena were losing their hold over the Kalahari, and the relationship between San / Basarwa and the Bakgaligadi became more unequal as the Bakgaligadi took up agro-pastoralism. Other groups encroached on Kalahari for grazing, hunting and gathering, and the practice of asking permission from San / Basarwa to use their territories ceased (Hitchcock 2002).

As agro-pastoralism was established and San /Basarwa land tenure broke down, the foraging base diminished. Solway and Lee (1992) describe the dry Central Kalahari as a “hinterland”, the only place where San / Basarwa could retreat and retain some autonomy. Elsewhere, San / Basarwa were integrated into the powerful Tswana polities and pastoral economies as serfs.

A History of Dispossession and Displacement

According to Robert Hitchcock (personal e-mail, 2005) relocations of San / Basarwa have happened for different reasons since colonial times, and are still happening today. He groups the relocations as follows:

- Establishment of freehold farms under the Bechuanaland Protectorate from late 19th to mid 20th century. The best known case is the Ghanzi Farms in Western Botswana, where n!ore (traditional territory) land of Naro and Au//gei San was parcelled out as freehold ranches to Boer farmers from South Africa in arrangement with the Batawana tribe (one of the dominant Tswana tribes in Botswana). The Naro and Au//gei remained on the farms, as domestic servants, herders and farm labourers in a dependent and highly unequal *baas-jong* (master-boy) relationship. The

⁷ Solway and Lee's text concerns the Western Kweneng San (Tshassi, Kwa and Khute) of the Dutlwe area in southern Kalahari and not specifically the G/wi and G//ana, but it is useful as a description of the history of ethnic relations in the Kalahari.

environmental pressure of farming undermined the basis for hunting and gathering, and as farming methods were rationalised San / Basarwa lost their jobs as farm labourers. Instead, they became destitute squatters on what used to be their own land. The Ghanzi “Bushman Problem” was later part of the motive for creating the CKGR (Guenther 1996, Hitchcock 1996).

- Rangeland commercialisation under the Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP) from the 1970s (discussed further in chapter 4). Currently, San / Basarwa in the Western District are affected by this.
- Mining operations in places such as Orapa, Lethlakane and Selibi-Phikwe. These relocations were relatively minor and San / Basarwa constituted a minority of those affected.
- Establishment of National Parks and Game Reserves, such as Chobe, Moremi and others. The CKGR relocation would come under this category (Taylor 2000).
- Establishment of settlements under the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP). The great majority of those affected are San / Basarwa (The RADP is also discussed in chapter 4).

The CKGR relocation is thus not an exceptional case of relocating San / Basarwa, but one which has captured the attention of international media and support organisations such as Survival International to a much greater extent than any other San / Basarwa land rights issue. Diana Vinding (pers. comm. 2004) attributes this partly to the involvement of First People of the Kalahari (FPK), a San / Basarwa NGO which is based in Ghanzi and has close links with the settlements inside the reserve. San / Basarwa in other parts of the country are less organised, and there has been less publicity surrounding relocations and land rights issues.

A Chronology of Events: The Central Kalahari Game Reserve

The CKGR was established in 1961 by the British Protectorate government, with the objective of protecting wildlife and securing a resource base for traditional use by hunter-gatherer communities in the area, and also to provide San / Basarwa who were displaced in connection with the establishment of freehold farms in Ghanzi with a refuge.

Prior to the gazetting there had been some international interest in the situation of the San / Basarwa in Botswana. Research had been conducted into their situation and there was pressure on the Protectorate government to secure land for them (Cassidy *et al.* 2001, Hitchcock 2002, Hitchcock and Vinding 2001).

At the time of its formation the CKGR had approximately 4000 residents who relied almost solely on hunting and gathering, and whose ancestors had existed in the area for 2000 years. Population numbers went down over time, as people left for towns and cattle posts in neighbouring districts. Inside the reserve settlements grew and became permanent in those places where boreholes provided a reliable source of water. People began to sustain themselves on a combination of hunting and gathering, small-scale cultivation and livestock, along with government provisions. Hunting was increasingly done on horseback and with dogs, instead of with traditional methods. At !Xade settlement the government built a school and a clinic, and during the droughts in the 1980s water and other provisions was trucked out to the various settlements. Service provision was continued after the drought (Hitchcock and Vinding 2001, Suzman 2002/3a).

With these changes taking place inside the game reserve, there was growing concern in conservation circles and from the government that human settlement was incompatible with wildlife conservation and tourism development. Some conservationists argued that San / Basarwa residents were partly responsible for the drop in wildlife numbers during the 1970s and 1980s, although others would say that this was the combined result of drought and erection of fences for cattle disease control (Albertson 2002, Hitchcock 2002).

In 1985, a fact-finding mission was appointed by government to investigate the situation in the CKGR and make recommendations as to the status of the residents and future use of the reserve. Removal was the least recommended option, but the ensuing White Paper on Remote Area Dwellers in the CKGR stated that development should be frozen in the settlements inside the game reserve, and residents encouraged to relocate to New !Xade and Kaudwane outside the reserve (See Map 1.2). At this point, (Old) !Xade had 860 residents, Gope 200 and Mothomelo 150. The decision to relocate was met with

resistance from the residents and the Ghanzi District Council (Albertson 2002, Cassidy *et al.* 2001, Hitchcock 2002).

During the 1980s, DWNP banned hunting and gathering within the CKGR and in 2000, new legislation required individuals who wished to hunt inside game reserves to apply in writing to DWNP, transferring the control over hunting license issue from local to central government. There were reports of human rights abuses at the hands of DWNP officials in connection with illegal hunting (Hitchcock 2002).

The conflict intensified in 1988, when government again requested the residents to leave the reserve and abandon their “primitive way of life”⁸. In 1989 Survival International issued an *Urgent Action Bulletin* on the issue, and initiated a letter-writing campaign to the Office of the President and Ministry of Local Government. San / Basarwa representatives wrote letters to UNWGIP (the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations) and directly to government. Relatively few relocated, and many chose to return (Hitchcock 2002).

In 1997 government decided to accelerate the relocation process. Approximately 1100 people -3/4 of the total population of the reserve- were moved to the resettlements of New !Xade in Ghanzi District and Kaudwane in Kweneng District. The resettlements were described by spokespersons and visiting journalists as bleak places lacking in wild resources, and government was criticised for not fulfilling its obligations of compensation payments and service provision. Families were separated, livestock lost and compensation was paid out to some and not others. In the resettlements residents had to walk long distances to collect firewood and as a result of the resource shortage, became almost entirely dependent on the government for their sustenance. Opponents termed the relocation a violation of basic human rights (Cassidy *et al.* 2001, Hitchcock 2002, Hitchcock and Vinding 2001).

In 1997/98 the Negotiating Team (NT) was established, with the objective of negotiating an agreement with the government concerning rights to land and resources for those with ancestral territorial claims inside the reserve. NT comprises two representatives from each of the seven settlements inside the CKGR, representatives of the San-based NGOs First People of the Kalahari, Kuru Development Trust (now Kuru

⁸ Quoted in Hitchcock (2002:807).

Family of Organisations) and the Botswana branch of WIMSA, as well as from Ditshwanelo –Botswana Centre for Human Rights, and Botswana Council of Churches. In addition, external legal and ecological expertise has been hired with funding from international donors, such as IWGIA (the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs) and Norwegian Church Aid (Ditshwanelo 2002c and Press Statement 25.03.98, Hitchcock 2002).

In 2000-2001, several informal meetings were held between NT and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) regarding the Management Plan for the Central Kalahari and Khutse Game Reserves. With input from the NT and CKGR communities, traditional territories were used as a basis for defining Community Use Zones, as units of resource use and management for communities involved. Both parties were satisfied with the outcome as were the concerned District Councils, but the Management Plan was never passed in Parliament. NT attributes the breakdown of negotiations to a poorly timed leak about the imminent success to a South African newspaper and the reinvigoration of Survival International's CKGR campaign (Hitchcock and Vinding 2001, Ditshwanelo 2002c, Suzman 2002).

In October 2001 President Festus Mogae announced that all public services to settlements inside the game reserve would be cut as of 31 January 2002, in order to encourage the predominantly San / Basarwa residents⁹ to relocate from their ancestral land and move to government settlements outside the reserve:

Basarwa are very much an integral part of our nation. This is why Government is encouraging Basarwa in the Game Reserve to relocate outside so that they can benefit from the social and economic amenities that are available to the rest of their fellow citizens, including Basarwa in the 64 Basarwa settlements¹⁰ all over the country. It is against this background that 2169 people have relocated from the reserve to settle in New Xade (Gantsi) and Kaudwane in Kweneng. So far only about 559 people remain in the reserve and are scattered all over the area which makes it difficult and costly to provide any form of life sustaining services such as water and health care. It is for this reason that Government has decided

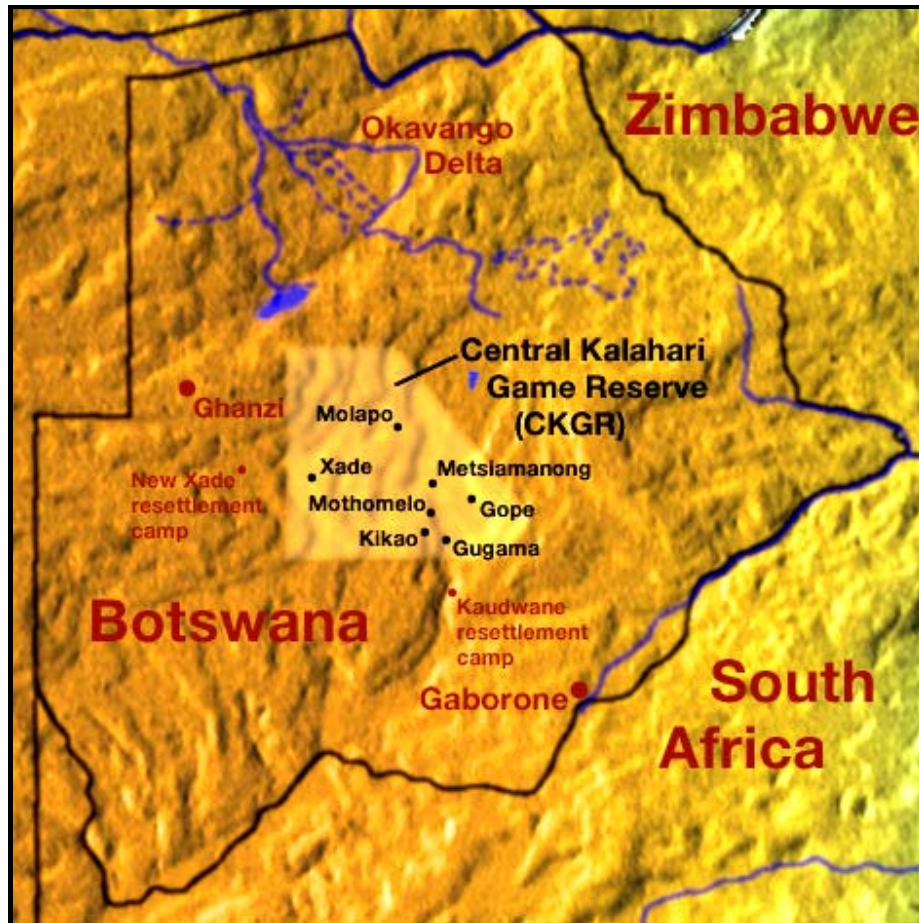
⁹The relocation also involves another ethnic group, the Bakgalagadi, but in public discourse the issue is always referred to as 'the relocation of the Basarwa from the CKGR'. The Bakgalagadi are closer to the dominant Tswana group in terms of language and culture, and have higher social status.

¹⁰ It is interesting that the President is saying "Basarwa settlements" here, as the government is generally quite keen to underline that the 64 settlements existing under the Remote Area Development Programme are poly-ethnic, and that the programme itself is ethnically neutral. Taylor (2000) sees occasional references to *Basarwa* in the context of the RADP as revealing slips of the tongue on government's part.

that with effect from January 2002 the provision of such services will be better provided in existing settlements. (President Mogae's State of the Nation Address 29.10.01)

Services included water supply, destitute rations, health services, old age pensions and care for orphaned children. The Negotiating Team appealed without luck to the government to reconsider the service cut and to reopen talks with the residents and their representatives (Ditshwanelo 2002c).

During February 2002, 450 residents were trucked out, leaving less than 70 people inside the reserve. At the end of February 2002, the Negotiating Team on behalf of over 240 CKGR residents filed a founding affidavit in the High Court, contesting the relocation. After several rounds in High Court and Court of Appeal, it was agreed that the case would be heard in Ghanzi with oral testimonies of present and former CKGR residents. The High Court is to rule on whether it was unlawful to terminate services and whether government is obliged to restore services; whether the CKGR residents were in possession of their land and were deprived of the land forcibly and without consent; and whether it is unlawful and unconstitutional for government to deny the CKGR residents game licences and the right to enter the reserve. The case started on 4 July 2004, and is still running at the moment of writing (May 2005). I was unable to obtain updated numbers for the CKGR settlements, but Survival reported that in August 2004, 200 people were living in the CKGR against the government's wish (Ditshwanelo Press Statement 24.04.02 and 23.01.03, Hitchcock 2002, Hitchcock and Vinding 2001, SI Press Statement 01.06.04, 25.08.04 and 05.05.05).



Map 1.2. Relative location of the CKGR and the CKGR settlements and resettlements. (North arrow and scale missing.) Source: www.survival-international.org.

The Conflict and the Stakeholders

The following section is a recapitulation in short form of the various stakeholders' arguments, and no references have therefore been given. The arguments will be returned to in later chapters with complete references.

The Government of Botswana: Modernisation and Assimilation

The relocation policy is founded on a broad political consensus as opposition parties have also expressed their support. The only exception appears to be the Botswana National Front youth wing, which issued a press statement contesting government's relocation policy one year after the service cut had been announced. Members of the opposition have in some cases raised critical questions, but this has been in relation to the

implementation of the relocation (such as the form of compensation paid out, type of training provided etc.). The arguments of the Botswana government¹¹ are primarily compiled from the government newspaper Daily News and the government's official website:

- Relocation is a “normal government exercise” as other Batswana have had to move for the common good of the country's population, for example in connection with the development of mining in areas such as Jwaneng and Selebi-Phikwe. Those who choose to relocate will be compensated for their property in the form of cash, and will be given livestock and title deeds to residential and arable land in the relocation settlements.
- It is too expensive and inefficient to maintain government services in an area as thinly populated as CKGR. The Ghanzi District Council has been spending BWP 55.000¹² monthly on supplying the CKGR communities with basic services. The National Settlement Policy stipulates that government is only obliged to provide services to villages of 500 residents or more.
- Basarwa cannot enjoy equal rights and opportunities as Botswana citizens while remaining in the reserve.
- Continued settlement is incompatible with wildlife conservation and development of the tourism potential of the reserve, because residents have increasingly taken up non-sustainable activities such as keeping livestock and growing crops.
- The opponents to the relocation are only a small but vocal group, which has manipulated and pressurised Basarwa to remain in the reserve against government's wish. They have an interest in Basarwa remaining primitive and pre-historic, so that they can be exploited as objects of Western films and tourism.
- Criticism from foreign NGOs and governments is based on a lack of understanding of the situation of the Basarwa and the culture of Botswana.

¹¹ Using “Botswana government” as a monolithic and coherent entity would in many cases be problematic, but it refers to the position expressed by MPs, cabinet ministers and senior bureaucrats, whose statements in regard to the relocation I have found to be very consistent. There may of course be institutions and individuals with alternative views, but these have not entered into the public domain to my knowledge. The only exception is the DWNP, which was willing to enter into dialogue and take on board the viewpoints of the Negotiating Team (discussed in more detail in chapter 5). My opinion is supported by Mogwe (2004).

¹² Exchange rate 2002/2003: 1£ ≈ 10 BWP

- Accusations by human rights organisations of the use of force at the hands of Wildlife Department officials in connection with the relocation exercise are untrue. Relocation is voluntary; Basarwa may opt to stay in the reserve, but without amenities.
- Speculations as to whether the relocation exercise is connected to diamond exploitation in the Gope area of the reserve are incorrect, as prospecting carried out by De Beers has indicated that the ore is not profitable at this point in time. The ore is furthermore located several hundred kilometres away from the settlements, and there would be no reason for the Basarwa to move even if mining activities were to take place.

The Negotiating Team of the CKGR: Participatory Development and Resource Conservation

The following list of arguments is based on personal communication, press statements, the transcript from the CKGR seminar (see chapter 3) and newspaper articles:

- The primary objective behind the establishment of the CKGR in 1966 was for it to be a sanctuary for the Bushman population to continue their traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Its designation as a game reserve as opposed to tribal reserve was to make its establishment more palatable in the current political climate. Thus the CKGR is the land of the San / Basarwa and relocation is in effect displacement.
- Ceasing service provision to the settlements in the CKGR effectively forces people to leave. Ditshwanelo –Botswana Centre for Human Rights has reports about human rights violations in connection with previous relocation exercises.
- The NGO coalition Negotiating Team, with the help of hired legal and ecological expertise, successfully provided input to the 3rd Draft Management Plan for the CKGR in consultations with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) during 2001. The plan allows for continued residence, hunting and gathering and keeping of livestock in Community Use Zones inside the CKGR, while engaging in eco-tourism projects in joint venture with private enterprises. Activities would be monitored by the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programme under the administration of the DWNP. The

Management Plan was approved on district council level and was to the satisfaction of the San / Basarwa communities involved. However, before it was approved by Parliament in 2001, Survival International initiated their confrontational campaign which infuriated the government and effectively brought negotiations to a halt.

- Survival International's campaign is culturally insensitive and destructive to the Negotiating Team, as politicians and government officials tend to associate their member organisations and spokespersons with Survival International, even though they operate independently. This has deteriorated the climate of collaboration and negotiation between the government and the Negotiating Team.
- It is unlawful and unconstitutional for the government to cut the services in the reserve, and with the stalemate in the negotiation process the Negotiating Team saw no other option but to take the case to court on behalf of the CKGR residents.
- There is no indication that the relocation policy is related to possible mining activities in the CKGR, as Survival International alleges. What is needed to make headway is a re-appraisal of the current development model, so that development can become more people-oriented and participatory than it is at present.
- The mapping of traditional territories carried out by the Negotiating Team's technical consultant in collaboration with First People of the Kalahari and the CKGR communities, challenges widely held conceptions of the San / Basarwa as not having a concept of land tenure or ownership.
- The arguments put forward by the Botswana government about environmental conservation and wildlife preservation are inaccurate, as:
 - Wildlife biomass in the reserve has increased in recent years, which indicates that resources are not under pressure.
 - A few hundred people lived in an area the size of Belgium, with a carrying capacity of 5000 people sustaining themselves by hunting and gathering.
 - Ecological knowledge is not immediately transferable to a new area. Moving San / Basarwa to new settlements is therefore likely to lead to increased pressure on the environment, because population densities are higher and the relocation settlements are located in resource poorer areas.

- The plans to construct 1200 km of roads inside the reserve to improve tourism infrastructure represent a bigger threat to the environment than continued settlement.
- It is naïve to expect that the CKGR will attract large numbers of tourists, as the other national parks in northern Botswana (Okavango, Chobe and Moremi) have more water and wildlife. For the residents in the reserve, foraging and hunting will remain important, whereas tourism would represent a limited income supplement. The fact that there are Basarwa living in the area will in itself attract tourists to the reserve.

San / Basarwa spokespersons: Questioning Citizenship and 'Development'

San / Basarwa spokespersons -representatives of the indigenous organisations First People of the Kalahari and WIMSA as well as residents of CKGR-have made statements to the effect of:

- There is no evidence to indicate that people and wildlife are “incompatible”. There is a long history of co-existence of people and wildlife in the area, without the wildlife becoming depleted.
- Everybody should benefit from the revenue from Botswana’s wildlife and tourism, and the CKGR communities are capable of managing the resources in their areas according to the principles of CBNRM.
- Relocation did not happen on a voluntary basis, as there were threats and intimidation by government officials. Communities were not consulted properly.
- Those who have remained in the reserve do so because they are determined to stay on their ancestral land.
- Life in the resettlement villages is not better. There is less space, and the services are the same that used to be provided in the reserve.
- Those who want to move out of the CKGR and keep cattle should do so, as long as this is a free choice.
- We are concerned about having to rely on livestock as an alternative means of living because of repeated incidences of cattle diseases.

These points were compiled from notes from Ditshwanelo's discussion seminar on the CKGR 05.03.02 and newspaper clippings. (It should be noted that in the analysis I am not considering the San / Basarwa spokespersons separately, but as part of the anti-relocation movement - Survival International and the Negotiating Team).

Survival International: Cultural Survival and Indigenous Rights

Survival International (SI) is an international advocacy and campaigning organisation working for rights of indigenous and tribal peoples world wide. It has been involved in the situation of the Bushmen in the region since 1975/76 and the CKGR over the last decade. The following arguments have been compiled from Survival International's website, various letters to the editor and newspaper articles:

- The relocation policy is racist and amounts to cultural genocide, as relocation is likely to lead to the crumbling of Gwi and Gana social fabric and group identity, and the extinction of a valuable culture.
- Bushmen are no less civilised than other Batswana (this is in reference to statements made by Botswana politicians on different occasions) as hunting and gathering is an intelligent and sustainable adaptation to the harsh Kalahari environment.
- The Bushmen have a right to decide about their own future, and from what Survival International has observed on field visits, the great majority of people did not want to leave the reserve.
- Survival International has recorded statements of torture and abuse of CKGR residents at the hands of DWNP officials.
- It is not expensive for a wealthy country like Botswana to continue providing services to the CKGR. In fact, the relocation is much more expensive than letting them stay where they are. Besides, the European Union has offered to cover the cost of service provision through a fund for national parks.
- If the relocation turns out to be connected with diamond mining, Botswana diamonds are no more pure than "conflict diamonds" from countries such as Sierra Leone and DRC.

- The dismissal of the CKGR residents' court application was a ploy by the government to win time¹³. The longer the court proceedings drag on, the fewer Bushmen will remain in the reserve.
- Access to water is a constitutional right and a human right which the government of Botswana violates by cutting the water supply to CKGR settlements.
- The Botswana government is dishonouring International Law (e.g. ILO 169), which states that the Bushmen have property rights over their traditional territories in the CKGR.
- It is a tragedy that an otherwise well governed and democratic country like Botswana should allow this case to ruin their good international reputation. They can however correct the impression by allowing the Bushmen to return to the CKGR.

Contents by Chapter

Chapter **two** contains the theoretical underpinnings for this thesis. It introduces the concept of subaltern subjectivity, the indigenous rights discourse, and the rationale of the post-colonial state's policies for nation-building and development.

Chapter **three** discusses my fieldwork and my sources, and I reflect on the researcher's potential contribution to the indigenous movement and the impact of my positionality.

Chapter **four** focuses on San / Basarwa's citizenship, in the context of state discourses of nation-building and development.

In chapter **five** I look at how indigeneness is interpreted, contested and adapted to a southern African context and analyse the interpretative frames of Survival International and the Negotiating Team, as the main opponents to the relocation.

In chapter **six** I distinguish between the different subject positions that emerge for the CKGR residents from the relocation conflict and reflect on their potential for San / Basarwa agency and self-representation.

¹³ This point is in reference to the first round in Lobatse High Court in April 2002, when the judge ruled against the CKGR residents on technicalities.

In chapter **seven** I sum up the analysis and consider what the relocation conflict has taught us about indigenous advocacy in the setting of a post-colonial, nation-building society.

2. ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

Indigenusness from a Postcolonial Perspective

Indigenous rights purports to be a global discourse, a tool of political emancipation for indigenous peoples all over the world. However, before we can speak of indigenous rights in global and generalised terms we need to bear in mind the vast power differences associated with speaking as or for indigenous peoples when this is done from a Third World or post-colonial, as opposed to a Western context.

All indigenous peoples have experienced stigma and discrimination by the state and dominant populations, but the experience of the double oppression of colonialism and post-colonial nation-building places Third World indigenous peoples structurally in a very different position from that of indigenous peoples in the Western world. If we are aware of these power inequalities we are in a better position to gauge the potentials and limitations of using indigenusness as a strategy, and to anticipate the reactions of the state and majority society.

The Subalterns

The ‘double’ marginalisation resulting from colonial and post-colonial subordination can be captured by the notion of *the subaltern*. Post-colonial theorists have pointed out that the main social divide in colonised societies did not go between coloniser and colonised, but between elite (comprising both foreigners and locals) and subaltern. Within the elite, the subjectivities of ‘coloniser’ and ‘colonised’ were mutually constituted through a multitude of interactions and reciprocal representations. Since the main division of interest was not that between coloniser and colonised, decolonisation did not automatically bring an end to inequality and oppression (Loomba 1998).

The nationalisms of newly independent states would claim to speak for ‘all’ citizens, but often built on pre-colonial and colonial exclusions of groups along lines of gender, class, race or ethnicity. These exclusions were in turn embedded into the legal

and political institutions of the state, so that colonial relations were duplicated internally. Thus experiences of colonialism and the “postcolonial” are not singular, they depend upon one’s positioning in the social hierarchy (Loomba 1998).

The *subalterns*¹⁴ are those segments of the population who were absent as subjects from colonial texts and encounters, and who continue to be excluded from postcolonial visions of the nation and the institutions of the state. They are groups who are or have been exposed to genocide, cultural and ethnic stigmatisation, political marginalisation and economic exploitation (Loomba 1998).

The situation of the San / Basarwa is a case in point. Since colonial times they have existed as a figment of the Western imagination, taking on shifting forms under the “Bushman” label. In the pre-colonial Tswana kingdoms they were ensnared and denied citizenship because they were considered to belong with nature and not society. In present-day Botswana, hunter-gatherers are constructed as out of time and place in relation to the modernised, developed nation, and are re-cast as *citizen-clients* in rural development programmes.

Representing the Subaltern

Subaltern knowledge concerns the experiences and stories that we generally do not hear about; the experience of living as a serf in a Tswana household, of being taken on a ship to England to be gazed at by a curious audience, of life in a band of hunter-gatherers in the Kalahari. Subaltern knowledge is about the view from below and from the periphery, but how do we access and articulate the experiences and perspectives of the subalterns, when all we have at our disposal are the discourses that serve to dominate and silence? (Childs and Williams 1997, Loomba 1998, Young 2003).

This is a central epistemological question in postcolonial theory. According to Spivak (in Childs and Williams 1997 and Loomba 1998) there is no pure speaking position, and no language to express silenced voices, which does not end up essentialising the subaltern subject. But while one should always steer clear of

¹⁴ Gramsci used subaltern to refer to “a group without class consciousness”, while the Subaltern Studies Group defined it as “a name for the general attribute of subordination...whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (Childs and Williams 1997:161).

essentialism for theoretical purposes, there are political reasons for wanting a subaltern position to contain a more convincing claim to ‘truth’. Hence we can allow *strategic essentialism* in order to establish a subject position from which to challenge dominant discourses. In other words, we are permitted to take the step of assuming that there are unifying experiences, for example of hunting and gathering or of political oppression and social exclusion, that can be taken to describe a group of subalterns and form the basis for a collective identity.

However, there are epistemological and political risks involved with representing the subaltern. Spivak warns against surrendering to “nostalgia for lost origins” (quoted in Loomba 1998:235) when portraying and speaking for marginalised groups. By this she means the assumption that native cultures can be restored to their undisturbed pre-colonial form, thus erasing the damaging impact of colonialism and modernisation. Spivak calls this tendency to celebrate all things pre-colonial while denigrating practices associated with the colonial and post-colonial, *reverse ethnocentrism*. The subject of reverse ethnocentrism is romanticised, reified and homogenised, frozen in time and place. Because it is an identity detached from context, the subject has no room to manoeuvre, resist and recreate itself according to shifting circumstances or desires (Law 1997).

I have argued in favour of seeing the situation of indigenous peoples as a case of subalterity, particularly in Third World societies subject to the conditionalities of development from Western donors and the exigencies of post-colonial nation-building (I make this case clearer below). Given the reservations placed on representing subalterns, can the indigenous rights discourse provide a speaking position that is more rewarding than those of icon frozen in time or assimilated citizen?

The Indigenous Rights Discourse

Following Anaya (2000), the international indigenous rights discourse can be thought of as a multilateral dialogue involving states, various bodies of the UN system, academics and legal experts, and different levels of the indigenous movement. It has constituted a field of knowledge through conferences, reports and studies, a set of legal

structures and moral standards in international law, and the contentious subject position of being indigenous.

The concept of indigenous rights grew out of the decolonisation struggle and an emerging movement working for peace and human rights after World War 2, concerned with rectifying the injustice of colonialism and its after-effects. Anaya (2000) sees the case for indigenous rights as arising from the fact that decolonisation did not restore indigenous peoples' right to self-determination. Instead, they were incorporated into new nation states without consent or consultation. Indigenous groups are therefore entitled to 'remedial measures' which can serve to reinstate their rights as peoples.

The Development of Minority Rights

During the 1950's, human rights were brought into the agenda of international law, on the basis of liberalist principles of the inherent freedom and autonomy of the individual. Human rights were designed to protect individuals against encroachments by the state on their freedom and autonomy. However, as a result of the integration of more non-Western states in multilateral institutions in the world system and the opening up for non-state actors to participate on many of these arenas, the universality of the state-individual dichotomy has been questioned and the need for alternative sets of rights to capture different constructions of community, belonging and citizenship has been realised (Anaya 2000, Mohan and Holland 2001).

The move towards recognising minority rights is connected with a widespread acknowledgement by governments and majority populations that assimilationist policies come at a high cost for minorities, in terms of living a cultural identity and in terms of realising life projects such as education and employment. What may appear or be intended as ethno-culturally neutral institutions, policies and practices, still tend to structure opportunities to the advantage of majority citizens and to the disadvantage of minorities. Examples of this may be choice of language in public institutions, public holidays and rituals or symbols intended to represent 'everybody', while minority languages and practices tend to be relegated to the private sphere. In many countries, multiculturalism has therefore replaced assimilation as a vision for polyethnic societies, and recognising minority rights (for example, permitting and supporting the use of

minority languages in the national school system) is regarded as a necessary strategy for countering the negative effects of states' nation building policies (Kymlicka 2001¹⁵, Solway 2002).

Indigenous vs. Minority: Peoplehood, Self-Determination and Collective Rights

The minority rights debate has taken two paths, producing separate norms and instruments for indigenous peoples and other ethnocultural minorities. The rights of persons belonging to minorities are dealt with in Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (the Minority Declaration), as well as various regional instruments. These instruments describe individual rights only, while indigenous rights are mostly collective rights (Eide and Daes 2000, Thompson 1997).

The indigenous-minority duality stems from the assumption that cultural minorities generally need affirmative action to be able to integrate into national society as 'full and equal participants', whereas indigenous peoples need special protection to maintain their separateness from national society. This assumption establishes the status of *peoples* for indigenous minorities and hence collective rights to self-determination, land and resources. The Minority Declaration specifies no such collective rights¹⁶ (Eide and Daes 2000, Kymlicka 2001, Kymlicka and Norman 2000).

A fundamental principle –laid down in the UN Charter as well as Article 1 of both UN Conventions- is the inherent right to self-determination of all peoples. Generally, peoplehood is associated with the right to independent statehood in a sovereign territory. However, theorists of indigenous rights stress that this principle does not reflect the aspirations of most indigenous peoples, who are not demanding cessation but some degree of autonomy within the nation state. Meanwhile, Article 27 of the ICCPR is too weak to provide any substantial protection for cultural minorities, because it only

¹⁵ Kymlicka bases his analysis on Western democracies, and although these developments may be said to form part of a general trend, they do not entirely reflect southern African perspectives on assimilation and nation-building, as I will show in later chapters.

¹⁶ Some theorists disagree with the assumption that only indigenous peoples are entitled to collective rights. Kymlicka (2001) and Thompson (1997) argue in favour of removing the minority – indigenous duality and open for collective rights also for national minorities.

guarantees non-interference by the nation state (as opposed to the active promotion of minority cultures through legislation or policy) and applies to individual members of minority groups rather than collectivities. In order to cover this middle ground between independent statehood and individualised citizenship, one has to consider alternative concepts of self-determination and collective rights (Anaya 2000, Brantenberg and Minde 1995, Eide and Daes 2000, Kymlicka 2001).

The Development of Indigenous Rights

Certain key events and bodies tend to be identified in discussions of the development of indigenous rights, such as the Martínez-Cobo study, the two ILO Conventions (No. 107 and 169), the establishment of UNGWIP, and the completion of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The general trend has been towards a more inclusive definition of indigenusness and more substantial protection arising from a status as *peoples* (as opposed to ‘groups’ or ‘populations’) and hence a right to self-determination. This development is reflected in the transition from ILO Convention no. 107 to no. 169, and in the text of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

ILO Convention no. 107 of 1957, the first legally binding agreement in international law concerning the condition of indigenous groups, resulted from concern over the situation of indigenous workers from ‘less advanced’ societies. It based itself on the so-called “blue water doctrine” in its understanding of indigenous people, thus referring to “small-scale, kin-based, and aboriginal inhabitants of lands now encapsulated within states formed by European conquest and subsequent colonization”¹⁷ (Thompson 1997:793). The aim of the Convention was to provide protection for individual members of indigenous populations, not groups as such, and as it was assumed that it would be in the best interest of these groups to be absorbed into (a culturally homogeneous) national society it did not stipulate any long term arrangements between governments and indigenous groups for the protection of their culture (Anaya 2000, Daes and Eide 2000).

¹⁷Anaya (2000:43) says of the blue water doctrine that it was devised to preclude decolonisation in areas where “enclaves of indigenous or tribal peoples living within the external boundaries of independent states” –i.e. referring to the Americas and Australasia.

What later came to be seen as a racist and assimilationist tone in No. 107 led to its revision, and in 1989 ILO Convention No. 169 was adopted. No. 169 is more inclusive in its defining criteria, and uses *peoples* (although with a provision that it is not intended as implying a right to independent statehood) instead of *populations*. Among other things, it establishes the right of indigenous and tribal peoples to maintain and develop their culture and institutions within their national societies, and that it is the duty of the state to facilitate this. The Convention recognises the strong relationship of indigenous peoples to their territories, and states that indigenous peoples have a right of ownership, use and management of the lands they traditionally have occupied. It says that indigenous peoples should not be removed from their lands unless as an exceptional measure, and where possible they should be allowed to return when reasons for relocation cease to apply. Where return is impossible they should be provided with land of equal quality. It also recognises the need for indigenous peoples to exercise a certain degree of autonomous self-governance in order to secure cultural distinctiveness and political participation. At the same time, indigenous peoples have a right to choose full participation in the larger national political community (Anaya 2000, Daes and Eide 2000).

A parallel development in the UN system took place under the auspices of the Commission for Human Rights. Prior to 1970 indigenous peoples' concerns were dealt with under the rubrics of minorities, slavery, servitude and forced labour, but there was no concept of "indigenous rights" as such. The Martínez-Cobo study, commissioned by the Commission for Human Rights, served to establish the category of "indigenous communities, peoples and nations" by providing a working definition, identifying particular concerns and problem areas relating to indigenous groups, and recommendations for how these concerns could be dealt with in the UN system and by governments (Anaya 2000, Daes 1995, Thornberry 2001, UNHCHR 1995).

In 1982, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNGWIP) was created, with the objective of establishing norms concerning indigenous peoples' rights by commissioning and publishing studies and working papers, as well as reviewing developments and making recommendations concerning indigenous rights. In this capacity, the UNGWIP has become an important forum for indigenous representatives and organisations to air their concerns and contribute to the Working Group's agenda.

Studies have been done on themes such as indigenous people's intellectual property rights, on treaty-making between indigenous peoples and states, and land rights (Anaya 2000, Daes 1995, Saugestad 2002).

In 1993 UNGWIP finalised the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is presently going through the various bodies of the UN system for comments and approval. The Draft Declaration has many similarities to ILO Convention No. 169, but contains stronger statements about political autonomy and land- and resource rights and has greater focus on collective rights as fundamental to indigenous peoples' human rights (Anaya 2000, Daes 1995, Saugestad 2002).

The Politics of Indigenous Identity

There is no formal, finite definition of indigenous peoples in international law, but the UN system employs a working definition with the following criteria (Eide and Daes 2000, Saugestad 1997, 2003 and in Asch and Samson 2004):

- First arrival or aboriginality: prior settlement to other groups in their traditional territories.
- Non-dominance: incorporation into an alien state structure and a lack of political representation; the experience of dispossession, marginalisation or discrimination.
- Cultural Distinctiveness: a choice to maintain a separate culture involving a particular way of using resources and territories, form of social organisation, language, law, and religious or spiritual values.
- Self-identification: the group defines itself as an indigenous people with the political implications that follow thereof (i.e. possible claims to land and resources).

The challenge of an open definition is to allow for the indigenous concept to adapt and evolve in different regional contexts, while still keeping it sufficiently unambiguous to make states accountable to indigenous peoples within their territories (Thornberry 2001).

In the following I consider some of the theoretical challenges posed by the indigenous concept, most of which were raised in a recent debate in the journal *Current Anthropology*. The debate was initiated by Kuper (2003), who calls into question the indigenous movement's assumptions about culture, ecology, place and identity.

A main dividing line can be drawn between those theorists who see indigenousness as a Western discourse, which stifles and disempowers those it purports to speak for by turning them into 'Stone Age survivors' (Robins in Kuper 2003), and those who see indigenousness as a political identity which is creatively appropriated, inflected and altered in its context

First Arrival, Aboriginality and Roots

According to Kuper (2003), the indigenous movement relies on an "anachronistic" conception of peoples and cultures as isolated pockets of tradition handed down from generation to generation. He says that early anthropology produced the categories "primitive societies" and "tribal populations", which were considered to be of a lower stage in social evolution than Western societies. The same racist attitudes were reflected in the labels put on local populations by colonial powers; *natives*, *aboriginals* and *autochthonous* were all considered to display a lesser degree of civilisation than their colonialists. The contemporary indigenous movement is now reviving "the native", but with a stroke of reverse ethnocentrism "indigenous peoples" and "tribal populations" have become the celebrated and politically correct equivalents of "primitive", while "culture" has turned into a euphemism for "race".

The indigenous movement's principle of first arrival assumes that the original inhabitants of a territory have privileged or even exclusive rights to its resources while other groups are considered as 'newcomers'. Claims to identity and resources thus become a question of genealogical heritage or "blood and soil", and this places the discourse of indigenous rights in the same category as any racist ideology (Béteille 1998, Kuper 2003).

Furthermore, the idea of first arrival is linked to Western myths of origin and purity, free of the intrusions of capitalist modernity. Indigenous peoples are seen as "the natural state of humanity", whose connection with their land is naturalised by the use of

ecological metaphors such as *native* and *aboriginal*. Indigenous peoples are imagined as living in a delicately balanced harmony with the natural environment, and it follows that if they are uprooted (that is, relocated) the result is cultural genocide. Thus, indigenous peoples and their territories become fragile entities in need of protection and preservation (Kuper 2003: page reference missing, Malkki 1992).

Self-Identification and Reverse Ethnocentrism

Whereas ILO Convention No. 107 took a wholly objectivist approach to the definition of indigenous (using visible, externally defined criteria), ILO Convention No. 169 has *self-identification* as a fundamental criterion. The self-identification principle brings agency and empowerment to the indigenous concept, as it is up to the group in question to decide whether they want to pursue their rights as an indigenous people. A self-proclaimed indigenous identity cannot be refuted by national governments, anthropologists or other ‘experts’ (Saugestad 1997).

The principle of self-identification may seem to suggest that indigenous mobilisation starts from a broad grassroots consensus, but this is a too simplified understanding of the constitution of social groups and collective identities. Robins (2001) and Thornberry (2001) see self-identification as involving the internalisation and adaptation of the international discourse on indigeness to a local context. This may initially happen through influence from external NGOs or academics, and / or through ethnic entrepreneurs in the form of indigenous spokespersons and local organisations.

Robins (2001) adds that although self-identification ideally is about empowerment, it is important to reflect about *whose* stories of solidarity, community, and independence are being realised. The power of the indigenous discourse may take a predominant direction: from above and from the West. The question is how one determines where indigenous self-identification and -representation end and instead come to be about the realisation of Western myths of origin?

To avoid reverse ethnocentrism in indigenous activism, one must distinguish between political strategies for rectifying injustice and oppression and attempts at restoring an idealised pre-colonial past as Spivak cautions against. This requires that donors (who are generally Western) and supporters (who are often Western) examine the

objectives of the projects they promote, and that all participants in the indigenous movement - spokespersons, activists, academics and organisations - are aware of the power effects of representing subalterns, to distinguish between the narratives that limit and narratives that expand the range of possible indigenous identifications (Childs and Williams 1997, Robins 2001).

Cultural Difference, the Politics of Authenticity and Strategic Essentialism

Kuper (2003) says about cultural distinctiveness that the indigenous movement's presumption of cultural isolation ignores the multitude of relations and exchanges that take place between groups, and the reciprocity that is involved in the creation of collective identities. When operating with an essentialist, rooted notion of culture, indigenous peoples' expressed wish to "maintain cultural distinctiveness" easily slips into a politics of authenticity, where the legitimacy of claims to land and resources or ethnic membership is judged on the basis of external, visible (and probably, stereotypical) criteria. An indigenous community, whose members do not wear the right clothes or engage in traditional livelihood practices, stands to lose its status as indigenous (Eide and Daes 2000).

The politics of authenticity is a demand for *embodiment*, where an indigenous outside is taken to reflect an inside of genuine 'indigenous experience'. It is premised on a supposition that indigenous identity is complete, eternal and coherent, as opposed to other modern identities, which are shifting, fractured, multiple and political (Robins in Kuper 2003).

The case for indigenous entitlement to land and resources lies primarily with the close link indigenous peoples have with their lands, materially, socially and spiritually. This link, their *rootedness in place*, constitutes the basis for collective identification and action as indigenous. But is rootedness a politically useful tool to make claims vis-à-vis governments and majorities - a case of strategic essentialism - or is it a reactionary identity founded on a Western fantasy that in the end can backfire?

Sylvain (2002:1083) warns that the essentialist link made between people, culture and place in the indigenous movement's rhetoric can lead to a politics of authenticity in the relationship between the indigenous minority and majority society, thus "trapping

indigenous actors in stereotypical definitions of their cultural identity”. This narrows the choices of individuals and communities with regard to how they should live, identify and develop as indigenous.

To Kuper (2003), there is no such thing as *strategic* essentialism. The etymology of ‘indigenous’ reveals an unpleasant link with colonialism and racism, which means that speaking as or for indigenous peoples serves to reinforce the very assumptions that created indigenous peoples as primitive, uncivilised and underdeveloped to begin with.

Robins (2001 and in Kuper 2003) in response argues in favour of a perspective of cultural distinctiveness in terms of *narratives of difference*. The boundary between indigenous and non-indigenous will be subject to continuous change and negotiation for each individual, within the group, and in relation to majority society. It is not a matter of maintaining a predetermined level of cultural separateness, but up to individual peoples and communities claiming status as indigenous to determine what ‘preservation of cultural distinctiveness’ is going to entail. What is important is that the distinction between indigenous peoples and other groups or general society continues to be meaningful, whether it is based on narratives of a shared past as hunter-gatherers or a shared destiny of socio-political exclusion.

The Case for Indigenous Activism

Those more enthusiastic about the indigenous concept than Kuper, are of the opinion that dismissing the only category indigenous peoples have at their disposal is not going to help in the combat against oppression and silence. The unacceptable alternative is “a total unrepresentability” (Childs and Williams 1997:163), thus one must take a purposive approach when applying the indigenous concept, one that always keeps in sight the political goals of indigenous mobilisation (Moser 1998, Saugestad 1998, Eide and Daes 2000).

Saugestad (in Asch and Simpson 2004) considers Kuper’s critique to be flawed in that it attacks one aspect in isolation –*first arrival*– of what is a descriptive, plural and open definition of indigenous peoples. Kuper thereby eliminates several decades of indigenous politics and the contributions of activists, academics and spokespersons from his consideration. The UN’s definition is widely accepted, and the political process

behind it has added layers of meaning to indigenusness as concept and identity. This is in itself proof that language is not eternal; discourses can only be changed by engaging with them (Childs and Williams 1997). Next to involvement in international forums, Omura (in Kuper 2003) adds that discursive change is also brought about by the everyday choices and practices of indigenous people.

Robins (in Kuper 2003) reminds Kuper and his fellow sceptics that indigenusness is not an anthropological theory about origin and community, but a *political movement* which employs essentialist images of the link between people, culture and place in its rhetoric. It is not the anthropologist's task to credit or dismiss statements about indigenous identity on the grounds of ethnographical 'facts' about lifestyles, livelihoods and contact between groups. The academic's focus should rather be on deconstructing narratives of identity and analysing how essentialist 'truths' are used strategically by the indigenous movement.

The Meta-Narrative of Indigenusness

As a reservoir of meaning for the indigenous movement, the international indigenous rights discourse provides a generalised, abstracted frame of interpretation which I will call the *meta-narrative of indigenusness*, inspired by Hovland (1996).

The meta-narrative concept draws attention to the capacity of the indigenous rights discourse for the organisation of knowledge and construction of collective identity - for example in the reinterpretation and appropriation of history, law and ethnography¹⁸, and by linking the situation of individual groups to history and politics on a global level.

The following components of the meta-narrative of indigenusness are based on texts by Anaya (2000), Brantenberg and Minde (1995), Daes (2001), Daes and Eide (2000) and Saugestad (1998):

- Indigenous peoples have a unique connection with their territories, which is distinct from majority society and other minority groups. This connection is manifested both spiritually and in the particular ways of managing the resources of their land (usually hunting and gathering or nomadic pastoralism), but is generally not acknowledged in national systems of land tenure or legislation.

¹⁸ Thompson (1997)

- Given the historical continuity in use and occupancy of their traditional territories, indigenous peoples have a right to ownership of these lands and resources. Without land ownership indigenous peoples will continue to be relocated and dispossessed as a result of nation states' economic interests, whether it is mining, fisheries, forestry, dam construction or other projects for economic development.
- Because indigenous peoples as “prior nations” were victims of colonisation and involuntary incorporation into nation states and as a result had their inherent rights as peoples extinguished, they are now claiming the *re-establishment* of rights to their ancestral lands and resources.
- Indigenous peoples' claim to self-determination as peoples is not a claim to independent statehood, but a wish to maintain cultural distinctiveness within their national societies.
- The striking similarity in the fates of indigenous peoples world wide serves as a foundation for solidarity and a sense of unified cause in a global political movement for indigenous rights.

We can also think of the meta-narrative as an *enabling fiction*, which establishes the right to speak *for* and *as* indigenous peoples and lets us conceive of indigenouness as a certain kind of knowledge and experience. It is not a position of objectivity and theoretical purity, as it has the political goal of intervening in the discourses that have produced indigenous people as subaltern others. It is a strategy with both risks and potential; the risk is to limit indigenous identity to the embodiment of an authentic lifestyle; the potential is to establish a more flexible notion of citizenship than that represented by assimilation (Loomba 1998, Moser 1998).

The Nation-Building Developmental State

Why do nomadic pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and other mobile peoples tend to constitute such a headache for governments, and what is the rationale behind the policies of assimilation and normalisation, which so many nomadic peoples have been subject to?

In the context of the San / Basarwa in Botswana today, assimilation involves relocation and sedentarisation through policies for rural development, losing their

livelihood through hunting restrictions and from lack of opportunities having to work for cash-for-work scheme under the government, and sending their children to public schools far away from their parents where they are taught in a language that is not their mother-tongue.

Scott (1998) and Sullivan and Homewood (2003) see assimilation and normalisation in relation to the state's hegemony in producing and managing knowledge in its effort to govern, which tends to dismiss and displace the knowledge associated with nomadic peoples.

Seeing Like a State¹⁹

According to Scott (1998), a key issue for the modern state is the legibility and predictability of its population and territory. A major shift in statecraft took place with the “discovery of society”, by which the population came to be seen as an object for intervention and control. While the citizenry previously had been seen as a source of tax revenue and statecraft for a large part concerned strategies for extracting it, the welfare and general improvement of the population (in terms of health and reproduction, morality and education, labour productivity *etc.*) now became the main objective of the state.

Legibility and predictability are essential for a state's capacity to implement plans and enable development; to govern its population and territory. This entails particular ways of seeing and producing knowledge, which Sullivan and Homewood (2003) label *state science*. State science is characterised by the standardisation, codification, surveying and mapping of citizens and landscapes. It involves a form of “tunnel vision”, which abstracts, generalises, simplifies and produces models (Scott 1998).

The logic of bureaucratic administration dictates that simplicity is preferred to complexity. For example, a piece of land with only one use and one owner is preferred to a situation where the land has multiple uses and meanings, and overlapping claims. Thus, in the process of abstracting, variation and complexity in culture, knowledge and landscape is reduced or eliminated. The subject planned for is an abstract citizen, without sex, ethnicity, individuality or personal preferences (*ibid*).

¹⁹ The heading is borrowed from the title of Scott's (1998) book.

Scott is not an opponent of generalisations or planning. His concern is that the abstractions and simplifications, the necessary steps behind the formulation and implementation a plan or policy, are often forgotten and the complexity they conceal taken not to exist. The result is blindness to alternative perspectives and other forms of knowledge that could inform and improve the process, or even ultimately determine its success or failure.

Scott attributes planners' 'forgetfulness' to the ideology of *high modernism*, the state's desire to administer and control people and territories in combination with an unflinching faith in the capacity of scientific rationality and linear progress, which is usually accompanied by a general contempt or disregard for local practices and knowledges.

The ideology of high modernism has led states into large-scale social engineering projects aimed at the transformation of populations and landscapes. Although these projects were usually inspired by egalitarian objectives –the wish for all citizens to have an equal share of development and modernity – they often had devastating results, disrupting social structures and practices, displacing people and altering or damaging environments (*ibid*).

When combined with an authoritarian style of governance and a weak civil society with little capacity for resistance, state plans are likely to partly succeed in realising their vision.²⁰ However, in between the abstract plan and its expression on the ground there is always practical knowledge, informed improvisation and resistance. Often, these are the practices that enable communities to survive and sustain themselves in the face of top-down restrictions and impositions. In the case of hunter-gatherers, this entails continued hunting (or poaching where it has been criminalised) and gathering to supplement income and government provisions (*ibid*).

Next to the abstract, theoretical state science there is a different kind of knowledge which cannot easily be generalised, described in words or presented into

²⁰ Neither the relocation policy nor any development plan in Botswana is of the same kind of scale as the projects Scott studied, but I believe his points still apply. As I will show in chapter 4, all the ingredients in Scott's recipe for policy disaster are present.

diagrams. This is knowledge acquired through interacting with and adapting to people and the physical environment, practical skills and ‘common sense’ developed through experience, and insight that is local and situated, adapted to the specifics of a place or cultural context. Scott suggests the word *mētis* (from Greek) to describe such practical, experiential knowledge. He stresses that it is not a question of blindly promoting native or local practices and dismissing the state as an agent of planning, but that he is making the case for “*mētis-friendly*” institutions and policies that are decentralised, flexible and open to the creativity and wishes of the people concerned. Instead of creating apathetic, passive subjects, plans that allow for the incorporation of *mētis* are more likely to encourage local participation and enhance knowledge (*ibid*).

State Territoriality and Displaced Knowledge

An example can serve to illustrate Scott’s point about the dominance of state knowledge and the potential effect for local populations (in this case, indigenous peoples) when their knowledge and practices are disregarded. It has interesting parallels to land management and conservation policies affecting the San / Basarwa in Botswana.

The hegemonic approach by states to land and population management in dryland ecosystems such as the Kalahari has been rangeland commercialisation, involving a shift from communal land tenure to privatisation and fencing and often displacement of local people. According to Sullivan and Homewood (2003), the rationale behind rangeland commercialisation is based on ‘state science’ in the form of mainstream ecology and the so-called *equilibrium perspective* on ecosystems.

The equilibrium perspective presupposes the existence of a “deep structure” in the form of a baseline climax community, from which the ecosystem’s behaviour can be predicted and anomalies quantified. A moment in the past is used as the yardstick against which present and future developments are compared. Any movement away from the assumed equilibrium is considered as degradation, and the local population of the areas in question is often held responsible, whether hunter-gatherers (in the case of fluctuations in wildlife numbers) or nomadic pastoralists (where changes in soils and vegetation are attributed to overgrazing). This in turn has justified state policies of sedentarisation and relocation, as well as restrictions on traditional livelihood practices such as hunting (*ibid*).

An alternative understanding of ecological dynamics is the *non-equilibrium perspective*, which stresses flux, process, unique events and unpredictability. This perspective sees a system which is constantly unfolding, and hence eluding generalisation and prediction. In arid regions with highly variable and often patchy rainfall (again, as is the case in the Kalahari), a reduction in volume or number of species or change in soil composition can therefore not automatically be attributed to environmental degradation. Seen from a non-equilibrium perspective, mobility and opportunistic use of territories and resources (strategies which hunter-gatherers and nomadic pastoralists have traditionally employed) become the soundest response to climatic volatility (*ibid*).

If the environment is seen as unpredictable and ungeneralisable (that is, ‘unknowable’ with the tools of state science), the scientist is no more expert than local residents, and states are in a weaker position to legitimise top-down intervention in the quest for legible landscapes and citizens. Furthermore, if there is no pure, original state and associated benchmark, it is difficult to formulate the goals and form of intervention of conservation programmes (*ibid*).

The objective of Sullivan and Homewood’s article is not to judge on the merit of competing schools of thought in ecology, but to show how knowledge (in this case, about the environment) that is vested with the authority of the state translates into real effects for people. In their opinion, the choice of one perspective over another is more ideological and political than it is rooted in scientific “truth”. Ecological theory has been used by states and ‘experts’ to justify dispossession and displacement of indigenous peoples, and it has dismissed and belittled the knowledge that comes from generations of living in and with a specific environment (*ibid*).

Their article serves to reveal a weakness in Scott’s approach, as we are not sure what it is that guides the state’s tunnel vision beyond high modernism’s demand for simplicity and bureaucratic expediency. It reminds us that there are ideological reasons why the knowledge and territoriality associated with hunter-gatherers is less likely to be ‘visible’ through the lens of the state, and therefore more likely not to be reflected in land management plans and development projects (*ibid*). If we instead of calling the experience and skill of hunter-gatherers *mētis* see it as *subaltern knowledge*, it leads us to

investigate how knowledge is authorised and de-authorised in relations of domination and oppression.

Sullivan and Homewood (2003:5) apply Mary Douglas' ideas about pollution and purification to investigate how the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate knowledge are maintained. Elements which are seen to transcend the standardised, bound categories established by state science are deviations from the norm, which threaten the authority and autonomy of the state. Removing the polluting elements involve "socio-political processes of purification – of knowledges, peoples, spaces and practices." Hunter-gatherers are one such transgression of the norm, as their mobility and difference makes them unpredictable and hence ungovernable subjects. The state attempts to reintroduce order through physical removal and sedentarisation, and by suppressing and denigrating hunter-gatherers' knowledge.

Bringing alternative epistemologies into states' visions and plans for development now becomes a more substantial task than Scott (1998) indicates, namely of revealing and contesting the mechanisms that constitute difference and occlude this *other* knowledge and identity (Moser 1998).

In the next section I make some points regarding the specific challenges that are involved with expressing and promoting a nomadic / indigenous identity in the context of the African post-colonial state.

Nomadism, Indigenousness and the Post-Colonial State

-In the African post-colonial states development and modernisation took over from anti-colonial nationalism as the unifying vision of the post-colonial nation; the legitimacy of the post-colonial state came to rest on its capacity to produce development and welfare for its citizens. In the context of this modernist, developmentalist nation-building ideology, nomadic peoples such as hunter-gatherers, as symbols of pre-modern knowledges and practices, can be seen to negate development and hence the nation. As an extension of Sullivan and Homewood's (2003) argument presented above, I suggest that the presence of hunter-gatherers can be seen as a threat to the image of the nation unified in development (Ahluwalia 2001, Laakso and Olukoshi 1996).

-Good governance, human rights and development have become arenas of Western surveillance and intervention in Africa. The Western controlling gaze is embodied in institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, development agencies and international NGOs. Post-colonial governments are sceptical to 'universal' principles of democracy and human rights, and will emphasise traditional and local concepts of community, citizenship and participation in constructions of the nation. Dismissing 'global' concepts becomes a matter of asserting autonomy and national sovereignty against continued Western intrusion (Ahluwalia 2001, Loomba 1998, Mohan and Holland 2001).

-In ILO Convention No. 169's definition of indigenous peoples, the principle of first arrival and aboriginality refers not only to habitation at the time of external conquest and colonisation as was the case of the "blue water doctrine" under ILO Convention No. 107, but also to habitation prior to the establishment of present state boundaries. This serves to loosen the perceptual link between indigenusness and settler colonialism and makes the indigenous concept applicable to Africa and Asia, which have different and more complex histories of colonialism, ethnic relations and population movements than the Americas, Europe and Oceania. However, it also generates debates about 'who arrived first' and the historical legitimacy of ethnic identities, and it shifts an uncomfortable share of the responsibility for the marginalisation of indigenous peoples from the shoulders of European colonisers to current governments, which may be keen to show the irrelevance of the indigenous concept to a post-colonial society.

-Decolonisation symbolically marked the end of oppression and a new beginning for a just and equal citizenship. To speak of indigenous rights becomes tantamount to *reintroducing* inequality and difference when the post-colonial state is trying to promote a nation of sameness (Loomba 1998, Thornberry 2001).

3. METHODOLOGY

Choice of Topic

The choice of topic for my thesis originally stemmed from a general interest in Botswana, where I spent 2 1/2 years in my late teens, and sympathy for the San / Basarwa since hearing about the previous CKGR relocation (in 1997).

Initially I was advised by Sidsel Saugestad, anthropologist and authority on the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) and political mobilisation among San/ Basarwa in Botswana, *not* to write about the CKGR relocation because of its controversial nature. Since I would never get a research permit to study that topic she suggested that as a human geographer I could instead focus on livelihood strategies in a RADP settlement, and from there I could make some reflections on San / Basarwa identity and their basis for political mobilisation as an indigenous people.

As it turned out, I moved to Botswana in 2001 with my family and a few months later the CKGR issue erupted into a new contentious phase. I was now in a position to follow the debate as a resident of Botswana, and I realised that I could write my thesis about the relocation without travelling to remote settlements and conducting interviews. The information was available from where I was in Gaborone, and from newspapers and the internet, and since I was not travelling to a 'field' to do conduct interviews with San / Basarwa I did not have to worry about the Anthropology Act.

The Anthropology Act was passed on the initiative of Botswana's 'Bushman Development Officer' in the 1970s, who felt that very few ethnographic studies actually had something to offer in terms of improving the lot of the San / Basarwa. The purpose of the Act was to encourage more applied research, on issues relating to development and land rights. However, with the current international pressure on the government, any research proposal involving the San / Basarwa would be under intense scrutiny from the Office of the President and likely to be rejected (Saugestad 1998, Taylor 2000).

On a couple of occasions I received quite negative reactions when I mentioned my research topic. Some implied that the CKGR had received more than enough unmerited and damaging attention already, and one person (who has been involved with San /Basarwa issues in Botswana for many years) said that the CKGR relocation is just the tip of the iceberg; in terms of numbers there are more serious relocations of San / Basarwa communities taking place in Botswana.

For me it was not a question of selecting a relocation that had received more tabloid headings and was more significant as a result. In fact, the CKGR is the only relocation that has attracted international attention and generated some degree of debate in the public sphere. (In comparison the Balopi Commission debate, which I discuss in chapter 4, clearly engaged far more people than the question of relocating San / Basarwa). The opportunity to analyse the opinions and positions that have emerged in the CKGR debate can hopefully provide insight into the rationale behind relocations, and why they are not given much public attention.

The Researcher's Contribution

Human geography as a discipline has a particular interest in, and perhaps theoretical sensitivity to, conflicts over territories and resources, and links between local and global constructions and articulations of identity. Indigenous politics, the struggle for recognition, land and resources at the intersection of postcolonialism, globalisation and nationalism, is therefore a topical and relevant theme for human geographers.

Historically it is however anthropologists who have had the greatest interest in studying and representing 'primitive' tribes in 'exotic' places; today's indigenous peoples and tribal populations (Béteille 1998 and Kuper 2003).

Anthropologists have been complicit in creating and reproducing stereotypical characterisations of indigenous people (one such category being "Bushmen", which I discuss in chapter 5) but their research has also given legitimacy to the indigenous movement by identifying areas of concern and elaborating the indigenous concept (together with indigenous spokespersons and other activists of course).

The critique from Suzman (1997), Taylor (2000) and others is that so much of the research conducted on the San / Basarwa has been motivated by an interest in them first and foremost as *hunter-gatherers*, reflecting predominantly Western theoretical debates and constructions of difference²¹. Suzman (1997:209, also quoted in Taylor 2000) suggests instead that researchers “focus on how hunter-gatherer identities are appropriated, constructed and negotiated and, furthermore, how the imagery of the ‘hunter-gatherer’ with its connotations of aboriginality and authenticity are invoked whether in the market place or the political arena”.

Similarly Hodgson (2002:1044) suggests that the role of anthropologists (I choose to include other social science disciplines here) should be to provide ethnographic ‘flesh’ to what is often a rather legalistic discourse of indigenous rights. Thus, rather than going in circles trying to arrive at definitions, ethnographic studies can shed light on how “activists and organizations themselves are defining, using and shaping the meaning of the term in their everyday discourses and practices.” She also notes the “value of extending the ethnographic gaze to new sites of research – the workshops, meetings, publications, and offices of indigenous peoples –rather than just the customary sites of households, ceremonies and marketplaces where “indigenous” people are usually observed” (*ibid*).

I believe my project corresponds to these suggested directives for research in two respects:

- I have, where it was feasible and unintrusive, tried to be present at meetings, workshops and offices (I’m describing this below) and I have made extensive use of the resulting publications.

- The insight gained from these events and publications have in turn put me in a position to reflect on how the indigenous movement is involved in aligning San / Basarwa identity as *hunter-gatherers* and *first people* to the global indigenous rights discourse.

²¹ I return to this critique and the associated debate in chapter 5.

Issues of Representation and the Researcher's Subjectivity

Taylor (2000) comments on the discrepancy between the abundance of research produced about the San / Basarwa and the lack of improvements in their situation that have happened as a result. Among San / Basarwa there is considerable disenchantment with (especially foreign) researchers who 'come and take our words and bring nothing back' (e.g. Saugestad 1998). At the International Khoe and San Development Conference in Gaborone in September 2003 (which I attended as a student observer), it was said that some San / Basarwa communities now refuse to cooperate with researchers because of past experiences.

This raises questions about representation and the link between research and advocacy. In the previous chapter I looked at what postcolonial theory has to say about representing subaltern indigenous subjects. Postcolonial theory asks whether, and under what circumstances, the "intellectual" can represent the subaltern (Loomba 1998). I take "intellectual" to refer to indigenous spokespersons and NGOs as well as academics, and so the same precautions should apply: thinking through the motivation for research and the effect it may have for images of San / Basarwa. This also entails a constant awareness of the boundary between political representation and theoretical representation, between strategic essentialism for political purposes and deconstruction for theoretical purposes (Spivak in Childs and Williams 1997 and Loomba 1998).

I have already stated that this study is motivated by concern over the situation of the San / Basarwa, and although I am critically examining the indigenous rights discourse this is done with the ultimate goal of making some recommendations for future indigenous activism. This is the more explicit and obvious aspect of my positionality as researcher. A more unexpected clue came from my reaction to statements by politicians and in newspapers about Survival International and foreign activists' involvement in the case. The suggestion that opponents of the relocation wanted to sabotage Botswana's economy because Western people cannot stomach an African country's success, or that their ulterior motive was to sell pornographic images of 'Wild Bushmen' in the Western market, I found ludicrous and almost embarrassing. My instinct was to eliminate it from my discussion altogether, but I realised that it is not the task of the researcher to dismiss viewpoints because she doesn't approve of them. The only way I could do some justice to

these statements was to try to locate them discursively. The formulations may be rather extreme (that is, seen from a Western viewpoint), but the sentiment they express is understandable in view of the overwhelming dominance of the West in global culture and politics. Again, it should lead researchers, indigenous activists and supporters to question what it is that inspires their passion for the rights of the San / Basarwa and what their 'Western-ness' might mean for their view on indigenous rights in Botswana or other Third World societies.

Collecting Insight and Material

Volunteering at Ditshwanelo

I started volunteering at Ditshwanelo –Botswana Centre for Human Rights in February 2002 because I knew the organisation had been involved for some time with the CKGR issue as well as other cases relating to land rights of the Basarwa in Botswana. I hoped the experience could inspire me to pick up my thesis which had been shelved for two years, and be a source of contacts and information. I assisted with two of their annual human rights film festivals, the initial phase of creating a website for the organisation, preparing project funding proposals and a few other things.

The Ditshwanelo office is extremely busy, with a very small staff engaged in advocacy, lobbying and counselling in a wide range of domestic and regional issues, such as death penalty, refugees, police brutality, the situation in Zimbabwe, labour issues, gay rights, land rights, minority rights and HIV/AIDS. They fund-raise for salaries and all their projects, as they receive no government funding. With the high work pressure meetings or consultations among staff members (and any volunteers) are often carried out in passing, or in simultaneity with a phone conversation.

In spite of their hectic schedule, Director Alice and Activism and Information Officer Maureen would take time to brief me on recent events relating to the relocation or other issues, and I also found that information could come interspersed in a discussion about a different topic, or a very interesting conversation could grow out of a small comment or sometimes a question from me.

On a few occasions my attention was brought to a relevant newspaper article or report when I would notice a copy lying on Alice's chair (she has one for sitting and one that serves as in-tray...) or it would happen to balance on top of the mountains of papers on her desk. It was through volunteering that I was made aware of relevant workshops and seminars, two of which are described below.

Discussion Seminar on the CKGR Relocation

In March 2002, Ditshwanelo hosted a seminar about the CKGR conflict that I attended. The participants included journalists, NGOs, diplomats and academics. In addition to Ditshwanelo, the Negotiating Team was represented with two members of First People of the Kalahari and the Negotiating Team's ecologist / technical consultant. Government representatives were invited but did not come, allegedly to avoid speculations in the press and among stakeholders as to the outcome of the court case between the CKGR residents and the government, which was scheduled to begin in April 2002.

The seminar was as an eye-opener to me, as it brought my attention to the disparate views on development and what would constitute a good solution to the CKGR issue by government and the local NGOs involved. My personal notes and the seminar transcript have been valuable sources for my analysis, in terms of showing the perspective of the Negotiating Team and members of the local academic community.

Capacity-Building Workshop for Ethnic and Indigenous Minorities

In February 2003, Ditshwanelo in collaboration with Minority Rights Group International (an international NGO working to empower minority representatives through training and providing advice) hosted a capacity building workshop for ethnic and indigenous minorities in Botswana. Representatives of various San / Basarwa groups were present, along with representatives of the Wayeyi, Kalanga, Bobirwa and Hambukushu minorities. The workshop focused on how international and regional human rights instruments as well as the Botswana Constitution could be used to address the concerns of indigenous and minority groups in Botswana.

During the group session the San/Basarwa and the other ethnic minorities worked in separate groups to identify problem areas as well as the appropriate strategies to deal with them, whether nationally, regionally or internationally.

I attended most of the workshop as a rapporteur for Ditshwanelo, and found it very interesting to experience how “empowerment” can be initiated in practice. It strengthened my perception of the minority representatives as being more assertive and articulate (most of the representatives present were University of Botswana academics) and therefore in a stronger position than the San / Basarwa representatives, most of whom came from CBOs and Trusts from around the country and did not speak much English. I also realised the need to go more in to the various minority instruments in order to see the background for concepts and how they are given a local interpretation.

Other Sources

Newspapers

I collected newspaper clippings from late 2001 to 2003, and again in 2004/2005 during the court proceedings between the CKGR residents and the government.

The Daily News is the government mouthpiece and was, up to 2003, the only daily newspaper in Botswana. The government website has an archive of past issues, which made it easy to go back in time and follow the development of the case. I also used the archive to get more background on the Balopi Commission (chapter 4), as the minority debate had gone on for quite some time before I started reading the local papers.

The Daily News’ coverage of the relocation issue was characterised by extensive quoting from *kgotla* meetings (the traditional public assembly) in CKGR settlements and re-settlements as well as in other constituencies in the country, with MPs and ministers are addressing the issue. Reporting was heavily weighed towards official viewpoints and activities, and there appeared to be no attempt on Daily News’ part to give a balanced perspective. During the time that I was following the paper’s coverage of the relocation conflict, there was no independent analysis or criticism of the issue.

I bought the independent newspapers whenever I found articles about the CKGR, but saw very few cases of critical journalism. On several occasions I found articles about

the relocation that were printed directly from the BBC or other international news agencies, without any supplementing research or editing by local journalists.

In one particular case journalists of the independent media were criticised “once more” by the Office of the President for “giving false validity to Survival International's campaign of disinformation against Botswana through confused, distorted and biased reporting” (Daily News 02.07.04). - Unfortunately it is not unheard of that Botswana politicians criticise the media when they find that reporting disagrees with or is less than praiseful of official policies and initiatives.

Seminar Transcripts, Reports

In chapter 4 I discuss the Balopi Commission debate, which in brief may be said to concern ethnicity, tribalism and nationhood in Botswana. The Balopi Commission's Report from 2000 and the conference transcript from a seminar and ethnicity and tribalism in Botswana hosted by Ditshwanelo in 2001, helped me see the relocation in the context of the discourse of non-ethnicity.

In 2001, the Regional Assessment of the Situation of the San in Southern Africa was published, commissioned by the EU. The study provides an overview regionally and per country of San's human rights status and socio-economic position (Suzman 2001a). Due to the “ethnic blindness”²² of Botswana public discourse, there is not much information available specifically on the San / Basarwa. I therefore found that the Botswana chapter of the Assessment provided valuable statistics and analysis of the impact of various government policies on the San / Basarwa population.

Political Speeches

I have quoted President Festus Mogae quite extensively in my thesis, from various political speeches- mostly to an international audience- where he outlines his government's view on the relocation, on development, ethnicity and nation building. Quotes from MPs and other politicians are taken from newspapers reporting from Parliament or *kgotla* meetings around the country.

²² Cassidy *et al.* (2001:5).

Survival International

Survival International's website provides a wealth of information on indigenous peoples and Survival's various campaigns. The Bushmen page contains links to newspaper articles in international and Botswana press, statements by CKGR residents, information about vigils and so on. Survival has issued frequent press statements about the CKGR continuously since 2001.

As I did not get the opportunity to meet any of Survival's representatives while they were in Botswana, I sent some questions on e-mail and (eventually) had a detailed reply from one of their staff. While Survival is an effective communicator and good at making its position clear, I was interested in some of the thoughts behind the strategy; who they expect to reach and mobilise, the relationship with the local NGO coalition (the Negotiating Team) and the domestic (Botswana) response to its campaign, *etc.*

Personal Contacts

I made contact with Professor Francis Nyamnjoh at the Department of Sociology at the University of Botswana, who invited me to attend seminars by local and visiting academics. This gave me access to unpublished papers that had been presented during previous seminars and other articles, particularly concerning ethnicity and nation building in Botswana.

Dr. Godisang Mookodi, also Department of Sociology at University of Botswana, gave me input about development as ideology, and made suggestions for literature.

Dr. Michael Taylor (UNDP / Ministry of Agriculture) who has done research on San / Basarwa ethnicity and the introduction of CBNRM in northern Botswana took the time to talk and lend me literature on two occasions. He drew my attention to the publications of Scott (1998) and Sullivan and Homewood (2003), which proved very useful for my analysis.

I had a meeting with Ruud Jansen (consultant and programme adviser at the IUCN, The World Conservation Union) in May 2002, when we talked about nation-building, development and the environment.

I met IWGIA's representative Diana Vinding in February 2004, while she was visiting Gaborone in connection with a Negotiating Team strategy meeting. IWGIA

supports NT's legal case against the government, and has been funding the First People of the Kalahari in Ghanzi over several years. It was an informal, unstructured interview that provided insight into an international indigenous support organisation and donor's perspective.

My friend Haldis Kårstad (then with Norwegian Church Aid in Gaborone) tipped me about events and developments in the CKGR case, and assisted with contacts and literature.

Another friend, Ann Gollifer, who is writing a bibliography about Dada, a painter who started her career through the Kuru art project, shared her thoughts and gave me articles on current cultural revitalisation and the meaning of dance to San / Basarwa identity.

TV Documentaries

I'm using quotes from two documentaries in my analysis: A 20-minute insert from *Carte Blanche* -a much respected critical weekly news magazine on South African M-Net- from March 2002 and BBC's 50-minute documentary *The Bushmen's Last Dance* from September the same year.

Carte Blanche's insert covered the Negotiating Team's efforts to influence the CKGR Management Plan quite extensively, and carried interviews with Minister of Local Government Margaret Nasha and NT's ecologist and lawyer. The news team filmed CKGR residents as they were dismantling their straw huts and loading government trucks to leave the reserve, and also portrayed the situation in New !Xade resettlement.

"The Bushmen's Last Dance" was screened on the BBC in September 2002 and filmed a few months before. It moves between residents who had remained behind in the CKGR, New !Xade resettlement, the offices of Debswana and Ministry of Local Government in Gaborone and Survival International in London, and gives a balanced perspective on the conflict in my opinion. The narrator's voice is that of the reporter and no explicit side is taken, although the motivating force behind the documentary's making is clearly the concern over the fate of the San / Basarwa.

I would not say that the documentaries provided new input or understanding for me, but since the statements made by the different parties were representative of what I

had seen elsewhere, they served to verify the positions I had identified. Several quotes in my text (particularly in chapter 6) are taken from “The Bushmen’s Last Dance” and a couple from the Carte Blanche insert. Because of the power of images to create associations beyond what is said, I have in a couple of cases given a description of the visual context of statements.

Additional Considerations

The fact that I live and work in Botswana means that the fieldwork has never ceased; there has been a constant addition to the material as the case has developed. I therefore feel that I have a good overview of the case and its context. For most of the quotes in chapter 6 I probably have two or three statements that express a similar view.

As the clippings, reports and press statements accumulated, I identified the most salient themes, and these were in turn what led me to explore theoretical issues, of nation-building, ethnicity, indigeneness etc. I have felt (and still feel) overwhelmed by the possible thematic and theoretical paths that the relocation conflict has opened.

Ideally, I would have liked to give more consideration to the current court case between the CKGR residents and the government. However, at the moment of writing (May 2005), ten months after the trial started, only nine witnesses have testified. The case has been put on hold for long periods of time due to lack of funding for the CKGR applicants’ legal team. President Mogae has already announced that if the government were to lose, they will appeal the High Court’s decision. Thus, there is every indication that the legal process will be a very drawn out affair, behind which the government is putting a lot of money and prestige. It is of course the CKGR residents who stand to lose the most (Mogwe 1994, www.survival-international.org).

4. CREATING “FELLOW CITIZENS”: NATION-BUILDING, ETHNICITY AND DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter I explore how state discourses of nation-building and development produce *citizens* and what the effects are for the San / Basarwa. Considerable effort goes into imagining a Botswana nation where ethnicity is irrelevant, and a citizenship that is just and equal in its distribution of the benefits of development. However, under the post-colonial state, legislation, policy and practice have diminished the rights and opportunities for San / Basarwa to secure their own livelihood, and have failed to encourage political participation. It is therefore questionable how far Botswana's much praised citizenship extends its benefits to the San / Basarwa minority.

The Nation-Building State

In its ideological work of containing and explaining the country's diversity, the modern post-colonial state must represent and re-present its population to itself and national society. (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996:68)

Constructing ‘Oneness in Diversity’

A billboard next to one of the busiest city streets in Gaborone carried for a long time a picture of a construction site and the slogan “VISION 2016: Building a prosperous nation”. “VISION 2016: Long Term Vision for Botswana – Towards Prosperity for All” is an official document intended to guide politicians and provide Botswana with a sense of purpose and direction for the future, giving new boost and impetus to nation-building. It is frequently invoked in the rhetoric of politicians, bureaucrats as well as civil society organisations as justification for concern and intervention. 2016 establishes a reference point in time together with independence in 1966, and gives a connotation to ‘the nation as a person’²³, from birth to maturity as its full potential is realised at 50 years of age. The slogan and image on the billboard emphasise the *work* of nation building; the nation must

²³ Jørgensen and Phillips (1999).

not to be taken for granted but requires vigilance, sacrifice and intervention with the reward of peace, stability and prosperity for everybody.

There is widespread consent regarding the benefit and desirability of having a strategy for nation-building, indicated by the fact that Vision 2016 as a document and idea is so widely known and embraced. For a long time there was also a near consensus with regard to the content of this strategy: the existence of different ethnic identities was acknowledged, but should be suppressed for the benefit of a larger national identity. Inherent in this national identity is the neutral state ethnicity of the Setswana-speaking groups, which represents the connection with the past but is still dynamic and future-oriented (Nyamnjoh 2002a, Werbner 2002).

The Basis of Tswana Hegemony

Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, a series of Tswana dominated multi-ethnic states (*merafe*) emerged in today's Botswana and contiguous parts of South Africa. Tswana state formation relied on the semi-feudal system of *mafisa*, through which patrons (chiefs) gave clients (subjects) usufruct rights to cattle in return for political allegiance, tribute and services. The *mafisa* represented the basic principle of political organisation and economic accumulation in the Tswana states (Thapelo 2002).

Tswana dominance followed a period of rapid growth and consolidation whereby other groups were incorporated into the *merafe* as immigrants or serfs²⁴. The position of *kgosi-kgolo* (Paramount Chief) was reserved for chiefs of the Tswana tribes²⁵, and leaders of immigrant groups would only have the status of sub-chief or headman (*kgosana*) at the village or ward level. The Basarwa were classified as *bolata* or *malata* - serfs or indentured servants. At the bottom of the social ladder, *bolata* would belong to a Tswana family and were stripped of all social and political rights (Bennett 2002).

British indirect rule was instrumental in consolidating the Tswana tribes, thereby laying the foundation for present ethnic relations and Tswana nationalism in Botswana.

²⁴ There is some controversy about the history and trajectory of Tswana dominance. For example, some ethnic minority groups reject the idea that their ancestors were refugees or immigrants in Tswana territory, and cite examples of residence prior to Tswana groups (Bennett 2002, Republic of Botswana 2000).

²⁵ Bennett (2002) says of the term 'tribe' that it was used by Europeans to refer to what they saw as a lower stage of political and cultural development in the colonies. The use of the term served to fix what had been fluid ethnic identities, and convert other social identities into ethnic ones.

The British negotiated the boundaries of so-called Tribal Territories or Tribal Reserves with the Tswana groups to facilitate the administration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. In the process, non-Tswana groups were subsumed under the eight dominant Tswana tribes. In the Tribal Territories land was communally owned, and it was the responsibility of the Chief to grant usufruct rights to his tribesmen. The remaining territory of Bechuanaland was divided into Freehold Land (claimed by white settlers and companies) and Crown Land. These two categories of land were established without acknowledgement or concern for the presence of other ethnic groups (such as San / Basarwa and Bagkaligadi) that were not incorporated into any of the Tswana major tribes. Residents of Crown Land got the status of tenants at the will of the Crown, and in freehold areas people lost all rights to land (Ditshwanelo 2002c, Greve 1996, Ng'ong'ola and Moeletsi 1995, Taylor 2003).

The Bechuanaland Protectorate was an administrative unit consisting of separate kingdoms or proto-states, so there was no sense of a Bechuanaland nation. To the extent that national identities existed, this would be at the level of individual Tribal Territory. In this context, 'tribe', or 'major tribe' which is more frequently used, could refer collectively to the ethnic groups co-existing in a Tribal Territory, as well as the dominant Tswana ethnic group of that territory. The terms 'tribe' or 'major tribe' and 'tribal community' or 'minor tribe' used respectively about Tswana and non-Tswana groups, are not in reference to population numbers, but to social position²⁶ (Bennett 2002, Nyati-Ramahobo 2002a).

The social and political differentiation within the tribe also had a symbolic - spatial aspect. A fundamental distinction in Tswana cosmology goes between *motse*: the public, organised village life and *naga*: that which belongs to the uncivilised or to nature. The functional-spatial hierarchy of the village (*motse*) with the seat of the *kgosi* (king) and the public assembly *kgotla*, surrounded by fields, pastures, cattle-posts and *veld* (open grassland) merging into the bush in consecutive circles, represents a mapping of the socio-politics of Tswana kingdoms. Under the *merafe* (kingdoms), true citizenship was associated with residence close to the *kgosi* and participating in the politics of the

²⁶ For this reason, commentators on ethnic minority mobilisation in Botswana will often speak of 'minority' rights and ethnic 'minorities' using quotation marks.

kgotla, whereas subordinate groups without political rights would reside outside the main centres. With colonialism another aspect was added to the spatiality of citizenship, which is still salient today. *Molao* referred to Roman-Dutch law (or ‘the law of the white Queen’ – Queen Victoria) introduced next to customary law in a system of legal dualism in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. However, in a more general sense *molao* also means civilisation, authority and order. San / Basarwa, as people of wildlife and the bush are people lacking in *molao*; they are uncivilised, ungovernable subjects (Motzafi-Haller 1994, Saugestad 1998, Taylor 2000).

After independence, tribal authority over the San / Basarwa diminished, but Tswana dominance was re-established in the institutions and practices of the nation state. In public life, Setswana and English are the privileged languages, as the national and official language respectively. Only Setswana and English are taught in the schools, and state media only broadcast in Setswana and English.

The Chieftainship Act defines “Tribe” as referring to the Tswana tribes, and the Tribal Territories Act defines the boundaries of the territories of the Tswana tribes. Districts and Land Boards with Tswana speaking groups assume the name of the major Tswana tribe in the area. Sections 77-79 of the Constitution in turn relies on the Chieftainship Act for defining the composition of the House of Chiefs, which has as an advisory role to Parliament in issues relating to custom and culture, and to the interests of the Chiefs’ respective tribes. Eight ex-officio (permanent and hereditary) seats are allocated to the Paramount or Territorial Chief of each of the Tswana tribes, while the four districts without a Paramount Chief (the non-Tswana dominated districts which were formerly Freehold and Crown Land under the Protectorate) must elect a member from among their Sub-Chiefs. This arrangement assumes that the Paramount Chief represents the interests of his tribe as well as the ‘minor tribes’ or *meratshwana*²⁷ of the district, and has been a source of discontent for minorities (Nyati-Ramahobo 2002). Solway (2002:719) adds that maintaining the tribal capitals (the seats of Tswana paramount chiefs) and their *kgotla* serves to preserve the spatial basis of Tswana hegemony at the expense of minorities.

²⁷ Meratshwana is the diminutive of *merafe*. It is considered pejorative and is no longer permitted in official texts (Werbner 2002).

Taylor (2000:136) says that there is now a conceptual blur between being a citizen of Botswana and being a member of one of the dominant Tswana tribes: “Dominant discourses tend to conflate these two meanings of the root *-tswana*, so that if you are a *Motswana* (citizen), you are expected to reflect the traits that are associated with being a *Motswana* (in the cultural sense), such as speaking *Setswana* (the language of the ethnic majority), or holding to its pastoralist values.”

Ethnicity and Tribalism

The assumption of assimilation has been built into nation-building ideology, and is illustrated by official representations of ethnicity and citizenship. The representation of Botswana’s population as an ethnic “omelette” produced by extensive tribal intermarriage and social migration supports the image of undifferentiated citizenship (Durham 2002, President Mogae quoted in Daily News 16.06.03, Nyati-Ramahobo 2002, Daily News 25.10.01).

This official version appears to contradict the sentiment among the general population however, as revealed by statements from minority rights organisations and a recent debate concerning the composition and role of the House of Chiefs (discussed in more detail below). For many people, identification with their tribe is essential for a sense of belonging, and this fact is underlined by the dynamic and resilient character of the chieftainship institution (*bogosi*) in Botswana:

Chieftdom remains the ultimate symbol of identity and freedom in the plural context of modern Botswana, making difference and belonging to given cultural communities a more convincing indicator of citizenship than the illusion of a unifying national culture [...]. (Nyamnjoh 2002b:34)

Nonetheless, in official discourse expressions of ethnic minority identities tend instantly to be labelled as tribalism. Speaking at the seminar titled “Ethnicity and Tribalism in Botswana”, Professor Ngcongco (Department of History, University of Botswana) presents his understanding of the meaning of ethnicity and tribalism in the Botswana context. According to Ngcongco, ethnicity is a universal identity marker, “natural and normal among humans”. In its benign form ethnicity defines belonging to a

group, a family and a home place, by giving you a surname as well as a totem.²⁸ Tribalism, on the other hand, is ethnicity in its virulent politicised form, “used to generate conflict in society” (Ditshwanelo 2002b:6).

Historically, the tribes or *merafe* were considered open and integrative, in that foreigners would be incorporated into a tribe without having to sacrifice their identity. The immigrant group could keep its leaders and totem, and in general tribal integration took place without friction (Bennett 2002, Ditshwanelo 2002b, Republic of Botswana 2000). The concern over tribalism in Botswana is thus over its modern, urban manifestation, as it threatens to undo the work of nation building:

There is increasing polarization along ethnic lines. Chiefly this is among the educated professional and younger sections of the nation in the urban areas. If this is not dealt with immediately and firmly, it is likely that Botswana, as an example of unity, democracy and democratic development, will be negated, as well as the objectives of Vision 2016. (Professor Ngcongco in Ditshwanelo 2002b: 6)

The ethnic ‘polarisation’ refers to the activities of ethnic minority associations (in particular SPIL of the Kalanga and Kamanakao Association of the Wayeyi), and Ngcongco’s statement therefore reinforces the perception that ethnic sentiments should be reserved for the expression of belonging to Tswana culture while the performance of other ethnic identities may constitute a threat to democracy and stability. This position is well tuned to that expressed by President Mogae, who, on several occasions, has urged ethnic minority organisations to self-scrutiny and restraint:

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that on numerous occasions I have had to speak about the importance and benefits of national unity. I condemn tribalism in all its forms and manifestations and challenge the collective leadership of this country including organisations of civil society to rise to the noble task of nation building and combating the monster of tribalism. [...] Botswana is a democratic society which respects fundamental human rights including freedom of association. I therefore call upon everyone to re-examine themselves and the organisations to which they belong and ask themselves whether in exercise of these rights they are a force for national construction or destruction. [...] I should state categorically that the people of this country are united; they have a common

²⁸ The totem, usually a species of wild animal, is the sacred symbol of a tribe. Totems are also a sign of the flexibility of ethnic boundaries, as groups which split or joined a different tribe often kept their totem. Thus the members of any one tribe often identify with different totems (Republic of Botswana 2000, Schapera 1994 (1938)).

history and a common destiny. One only needs to travel around the country to realise that it is a tiny group of mostly urban elites who seem poised to poison the atmosphere in pursuit of their narrow, sectarian, and selfish interests. The irony of it all, Mr. Speaker, is that they are the major beneficiaries of the achievements of the past 35 years and therefore stand to lose the most from any reversal of these achievements. But we will not allow that to happen! Batswana will not live with it; neither will they tolerate it, because they know what the future holds for them if they continue as a united, democratic, and tolerant society. (President Mogae, State of the Nation Address 2001)

The phrase “Unity in Diversity”, adopted from the ANC’s nation building rhetoric is also employed by Botswana politicians. It does not usually, however, refer to a nation building strategy entailing “moderate universalism with the recognition of ethnic and cultural difference”²⁹ as in the context of South Africa, but one that encourages people to ignore difference for the purpose of imagining homogeneity. “Oneness in diversity” may therefore be a more pertinent motto for the Botswana version of nation building:

The Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration, Daniel Kwelagobe says Botswana like other states formed out of a diversity of cultures must constantly deal with the challenges of constructing oneness in diversity. [...] Minister Kwelagobe was speaking at the opening of a five-day workshop on Multiculturalism in Africa in Gaborone on Monday. The workshop focused on peaceful and constructive accommodation in situations involving minorities and indigenous people. (Daily News 25.02.02)

Whereas ‘unity’ in the ANC slogan refers to a coming together of different elements, ‘oneness’ in Minister Kwelagobe’s words implies sameness or an undifferentiated whole. The choice of phrasing is as revealing as the context in which it was spoken: a multiculturalism workshop bringing together minority and indigenous representatives, NGOs, UN experts and academics to discuss cultural identity and the human rights of minorities in Africa.

Ethnic Minority Mobilisation: Politics of Recognition

We all deserve to be recognised as different tribal groupings who together make a whole called Botswana. We cannot achieve unity by denying other groups their

²⁹ Boyce 1999:234.

identity, the age of serfdom and domination has long passed. (*Shikati* (Chief) Calvin Kamanakao I of the Wayeyi (Bayeyi), quoted in Nyamnjoh 2002b:36.)

The last national census that recorded ethnic belonging took place in 1946, but it is suggested that there are at least 25 different ethnic groups in Botswana. So-called minority tribes include Wayeyi, Bakgaligadi, Bakalanga, Hambukushu, Herero and Subiya in addition to San / Basarwa (Batibo 2002, Cassidy *et al.* 2001). Over the past decade or so, a minority rights movement has established a voice and a space in public consciousness, causing “the first major cracks in Setswana hegemony in Botswana” (Taylor 2000:207).

According to Selolwane (2001) and Solway (2002), ethnic relations have never been a vote catcher for the political opposition in Botswana. The BDP government has been relatively successful at providing services evenly across the ethnic spectrum and ethnic and class positions have therefore been disassociated. To minorities, Botswana citizenship may be meaningful in material terms by providing access to education and employment, but not in cultural terms as they have had to sacrifice their ethnic identity to the Tswana nation.

President Mogae (in the quote above) considers minority mobilisation to reflect ingratitude over Botswana’s achievement in development, but Solway (2002) argues that it is precisely the capacity and efficacy of state institutions in Botswana that has enabled minority empowerment. Through the process of bureaucratic rationalisation (whereby citizens know about their rights and have trust in bureaucratic structures to realise these rights), members of minorities have gained access to the state while ethnic patron-client networks have diminished. Urbanisation has also been a significant factor, as towns are more ethnically neutral meeting places than district capitals, which are the seats of Tswana paramount chiefs.

Ethnic mobilisation in Botswana hence does not question the legitimacy of national citizenship as shown by *Shikati* Kamanakao’s statement, but is a call for tribal equality. Full presence in the nation requires that ethnic minorities’ traditional leaders are recognised and included in the House of Chiefs and the Chieftainship Act on an equal level with the Tswana tribes, and legislation pertaining to the use and preservation of minority languages and cultures is introduced. In the rhetoric of their spokespersons,

ethnic minorities' sacrifice through nearly four decades of post-independence nation building is emphasised, and they ask if the Botswana nation is not sufficiently mature by now to cope with difference without disintegrating (Chebanne 2002, Nyati-Ramahobo 2002).

Tribal Equality versus Tribal Neutrality

In 2000, the President appointed the Balopi Commission, with the mandate to consider whether the sections of the Constitution which describe the composition and role of House of Chiefs should be repealed or amended due to long standing criticism of ethnic discrimination. The motion adopted by Parliament prior to the establishment of the Balopi Commission read:

That this House requests Government, in order to promote Nation Building, to amend Sections 77, 78 and 79 of the Constitution in order to render them tribally neutral. (Republic of Botswana 2000:1)

The phrasing shows that the intention was not primarily to establish whether the Constitution was discriminatory and if so what should be done to correct it, but how the impression of *tribal neutrality*, referred to in the ensuing debate as 'the status quo', could be maintained in the service of nation building³⁰.

The Balopi Commission conducted its analysis on the basis of public *kgotla* hearings throughout the country, submissions from individuals and interest groups as well as statements from politicians and civil servants involved in the writing of the Constitution prior to independence in 1966. The process generated intense public debate, through which the purported tribal neutrality of Botswana was questioned.

Proponents of the 'status quo' stressed the territorial, as opposed to cultural or ethnic, character of the tribes. The Paramount Chiefs do not represent any particular ethnic groups but the people residing within their territory, and therefore all Batswana are already represented in the House of Chiefs.

³⁰ It is interesting to consider the motion which was tabled by a member of the opposition party Botswana National Front in 1988 and rejected by Parliament, as it was much more radical in its wording: "That in accordance with the principles of democracy and equality this Honourable House urges Government to amend Sections 77, 78 and 79 of the Constitution of Botswana to recognise equality of all tribes of Botswana and their Chiefs." (Republic of Botswana 2000:8, my emphasis).

The Vision 2016 Council (responsible for writing and overseeing the implementation of the Vision 2016 document) made it clear that they perceived the Constitution to be discriminatory as ex-officio membership to the House of Chiefs excludes non-Tswana tribes. Their position therefore conflicted with the official objective of tribal neutrality, as they were using tribe in the sense ethnic group. Among those fighting for equal representation, the Vision 2016 document was therefore frequently cited, with its rhetoric of tolerance and multiculturalism (Republic of Botswana 2000).

In the White Paper adopted by Parliament in May 2002, ex-officio membership was extended to include the four districts whose members previously only had Sub-Chief status. However, an alternative model with one representative per tribe was discarded on the grounds that the process of identifying all tribes would prove to be “divisive” and “undermine nation building”. A suggestion to replace some District and Land Board names and replace them with less Tswana charged designations was eventually rejected (Nyamnjoh 2002b, Republic of Botswana 2000:118).

In a petition by the non-Tswana speaking groups the White Paper was criticised for “entrenching the status quo”, and it was maintained that the minority groups would not accept anything short of equal representation. As everybody knows who their Chief is, there is no reason to assume that identifying eligible members would be a source of conflict. It was pointed out that the decision to replace the official designation House of Chiefs with the Setswana *Ntlo ya Dikgosi*³¹ would serve to privilege Setswana further at the cost of minority languages, many of which have a different word for chief. Also, the concept of ‘territorial tribes’ was said to be founded on Tswana dominance, not ethnic neutrality (Daily News 07.05.02, Nyamnjoh 2002b).

Indigenusness and Nation-Building

The Balopi Commission process provided a forum for negotiating the relationship between ethnicity, territoriality and nationhood in Botswana, but it did not explicitly make reference to indigenous rights. San / Basarwa spokespersons have made statements requesting official recognition as a tribe and representation on an equal level with

³¹ This was done because it was felt that the English word ‘Chief’ did not adequately reflect the significance of *bogosi*, the Chieftainship institution in Botswana (Republic of Botswana 2000).

Tswana Chiefs in the House of Chiefs (e.g. Ditshwanelo 2002b), but the debate was still characterised by a relative invisibility of San / Basarwa compared to other minorities.

Several of the texts used as a background for this section (academic articles, the Balopi Commission Report and the President's speech), quite comfortably discuss minority politics without making any reference to the San / Basarwa, to most of whom Botswana's development has NOT disassociated ethnicity and class or created a materially beneficial citizenship, and who are barely represented in national and local politics. The public assembly of the *kgotla* was the symbol of citizenship in the Tswana kingdoms, and in contemporary Botswana it is one of the symbols of the country's long-standing tradition for participatory democracy, consultation and negotiation. However, the *kgotla* traditionally excluded women, the youth and to some degree ethnic minorities, especially the San / Basarwa (Ahluwalia 2001, The Botswana Gazette (letter to the Editor) 18.12.02).

The minority rights movement has taken shape through the possibilities created by their integration into the structures of the modern nation state, but the San /Basarwa's struggle is more conditioned by the lack of such possibilities. While minority representatives write their speeches and statements from their UB (University of Botswana) offices in Gaborone, San /Basarwa spokespersons often have little or no education³², speak little or no English (the language of conferences and workshops, and of government) and come from CBOs in remote areas.

The tendency to omit the San / Basarwa from discussions on minority rights may partly result from the extreme degree of marginalisation, but I believe that it also has to do with the type of claims that are made. I suggest that the minority struggle is predominantly about symbolic recognition and polyethnic rights³³, and although San / Basarwa could benefit from legislation securing cultural rights of minorities – for example, mother-tongue instruction at pre- or primary school level³⁴ – the question of

³² There are of course exceptions. At the Research for Khoe and San Development conference in Gaborone in September 2003, a young San /Mosarwa woman who had graduated from a British University with a Masters degree described how she had gone through the various levels of education hiding her 'Basarwaness' from students and teachers in order to improve her chance of success. She is now involved in the indigenous movement.

³³ *Polyethnic rights* are intended to protect and promote cultural and religious traditions or languages threatened by state policy or practice (Thompson 1997).

³⁴ Taylor (2000) says that in the communities he studied in northern Botswana, many San / Basarwa children grow up speaking Setswana at home instead of their mother tongue. The reason is that parents do not want their children to be

material rights to culture, the rights to land and resources, is still essential to San / Basarwa's struggle, whether this is coached in terms of poverty and class or indigenusness and cultural survival (Sylvain 2002, Taylor 2000).

Any claim to land from San / Basarwa that makes reference to their needs *as* San / Basarwa collide profoundly with the imagination of the Botswana nation as an organic unification of pre-colonial and colonial Tswana-dominated territories:

Many argued that the Dikgosi-kgolo (Paramount Chiefs) of the past were the leaders of multi-ethnic coalitions who defended the territory of modern Botswana from such nineteenth century invaders as the Amandebele, Bakololo, and the Boers. During the process of these struggles, many groups were given protection by various Dikgosi-kgolo. They were allocated land and otherwise accorded political rights within the *merafe* of the Dikgosi-kgolo. In the process larger, more prosperous polities emerged, and these can be seen as the foundation stones of modern Botswana. (Republic of Botswana 2000:22)

The quote is based on submissions made to the Balopi Commission and describes the origin of the Botswana nation. It is an example of how national unity becomes "a historicity of a territory and a territorialisation of a history"³⁵, which is not easily challenged by alternative affiliations to place. The view is that the *dikgosi-kgolo* protected the territory and population of Botswana from outsiders, even before the country existed as such. The Botswana nation is an inevitable outcome of history, as the various tribes voluntarily ceded their territory (and in some instances, mineral rights) "for the common good of the nation" (*ibid*: 21). The sentiment is that the country's recent history has shown that accepting the past is the most effective way to avoid ethnic conflict. Giving in to the demands of ethnic minorities could "open a Pandora's Box of conflicting land claims" (*ibid*: 24) and undermine the very foundation of the Botswana nation.

For indigenusness to become an acceptable concept the dominant narrative of the nation must be revisited and de-authorised. The tribes were open and integrative to 'foreigners', but on Tswana terms, and Botswana citizenship is ethnically neutral and equal – seen through a Tswana-tinted lens. The adjustment process that started with

disadvantaged in primary school, where Setswana is the medium of instruction during the first years. This is ethnic assimilation at work, which could be countered with mother-tongue instruction during early school years.

³⁵ Poulantzas 1978, quoted in Watts 1999:87.

claims from other minority representatives and the Balopi Commission debate now continues as the relocation conflict raises questions about Botswana's democracy and citizenship - from the specific perspective of the San / Basarwa minority.

The Developmental State

After independence from British protectorate status in 1966, Botswana immediately embarked on a state-capitalist development path (Durham 2002). According to Taylor (2001), Botswana displays many of the characteristics associated with developmental states: a competent and efficient bureaucracy, a weak political opposition and civil society which have contributed to relative autonomy of the political and bureaucratic elite to formulate and implement policies, and a well established tradition for tight control over the planning and budgeting of development projects through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.

Taylor (*ibid*) considers Botswana's developmental state to have been a success in terms of enabling and managing economic growth, and also in discursive terms as 'development' has become *the* ideological underpinning and legitimising principle for the nation-building state. The pervasiveness of the developmentalist ideology is illustrated by the role of the Vision 2016 document as a source of reference and inspiration for identifying long term goals to guide the formulation of National Development Plans. The goal of the state –citizen welfare through development- is conflated with the goal of the nation - the citizens united in the benefits of development (Ahluwalia 2001).

Ahluwalia (*ibid*) comments that when there is a strong emphasis on centralised planning this can lead to the depoliticisation of development. Resources are allocated according to a preset plan rather than as a result of continuous political debate, and groups with alternative views and conceptions of development may be repressed as a result. Ahluwalia says further that "the state is connected to the people not only through the doctrine of representative government but also through its commitment to direct an economic development programme on behalf of its citizens" (*ibid*:71). Thus 'development' becomes a defining element of citizenship; it is the right and the obligation of a citizen to be 'developed' but this does not necessarily entail a right to

participate in determining the parameters of development (Ruud Jansen pers. comm. 2002).

The link between development and citizenship can be elaborated with reference to the Tswana socio-spatial model of citizenship described earlier in the chapter. The model separates the realm of nature (the wild bush) from the realm of culture (the civilised village life ruled according to *molao*). Thus to make the transition from bush to village is to become a proper person, a subject and a *citizen* (Taylor, pers. comm. 2005). This is crucial for understanding the objective and outcome of rural development policies as well as the terms under which people can participate as Botswana citizens.

Development and Territoriality

Development and nation-building are fundamentally spatial discourses, reflecting a will to order spaces and the people in them (Radcliffe 1999). In Botswana, development plans are designed for the abstract normalised citizen, who, as the discussion on nation-building showed, is Tswana. Plans and policies reflect dominant ideas about what constitutes rational use of land and environmental management, where people should live and what are appropriate livelihoods. While the territoriality of the state is infused with the logic of Tswanaedom, the San / Basarwa represent a subaltern territoriality which is not represented on any map or reflected in any legislation or policy.

With the basis in a discussion of aspects of state versus San / Basarwa territoriality, I look more closely at two rural development programmes which are important to the San / Basarwa minority; the Remote Area Development Programme and Community-Based Natural Resource Management.

State Territoriality

The colonial land categorisation (as described earlier in the chapter) was maintained at Independence. Crown Land now became State Land (23% of the total area, for a large part National Parks and Wildlife Management Areas), Tribal Reserves became Tribal Land (71.3%) and Freehold Land (5.7%) remained as such. Under the emerging nation state, land reforms and changes in land rights legislation was conducted on the terms of Tswana residential and pastoral culture (Cassidy *et al.* 2001, Taylor 2003).

The Tribal Land Act was enacted in 1968, through which land allocation powers were transferred from the Chief to District Land Boards. The legislation assumed a Tswana model of land tenure, through which land could be used only for residential, grazing, arable and commercial purposes. Alternative activities such as hunting and gathering were not considered forms of land use that would qualify for tenure rights, and customary land rights were restricted to members of the tribe or tribesmen of the particular area. According to the territorial definition of tribe (discussed above) this should cover all residents of the Land Board's jurisdiction, but in effect minority ethnic groups, in particular San / Basarwa, were denied customary land rights. The Tribal Land Act was amended in 1993 and the word 'tribesmen' replaced by 'citizen' to remove distinctions on tribal grounds, but *de jure* access to land has not translated into *de facto* access. For example, San / Basarwa are not represented on any Land Boards and their applications for land tend not to be prioritised (Cassidy et. al 2001, Greve 1996, Ng'ong'ola and Moeletsi 1995, Taylor 2003, Werbner 2002).

The Tribal Grazing Land Policy reflects Sullivan and Homewood's (2003, discussed in chapter 2) description of the process of rangeland commercialisation in drylands. It was implemented from 1975, on the basis of the principle of 'the tragedy of the commons'³⁶. By re-designating communal land suitable for grazing to large leasehold ranches, it was hoped that the cattle industry would become more profitable and cause less harm to the environment by preventing over-grazing. The leaseholder gained *de facto* control over the land including wildlife and plants, at the expense of San / Basarwa. Grazing depleted important veld species, and fencing affected wildlife migrations and thus hunting conditions also in adjacent areas. 28-31,000 people were estimated to live in commercial ranching areas and were turned into trespassers or illegal residents. They were not given compensation in cash or given alternative land (Cassidy *et al.* 2001, Hitchcock 1996, Saugestad 1998, Taylor 2003).

A more recent development in grazing land management is the Fencing Component of the National Agricultural Development Policy of 1991, under which the owner of a borehole (of whom few or none are San / Basarwa) is permitted to fence the

³⁶ "Tragedy of the Commons" is Hardin's hypothesis that communal ownership of land will lead to degradation because individual gain always comes before duty to the community (Sullivan and Homewood 2003).

grazing lands around the borehole and thus gain exclusive rights to all resources in the fenced area for 50 years. This serves to dispossess those who are landless and without the means to sink a borehole even further (Taylor 2003).

The Fauna Conservation Proclamation was intended to protect the hunting rights of San / Basarwa, as it allowed for subsistence hunting without licence. It did not define 'subsistence hunter' however, with the effect that DWNP game wardens made the distinction according to their own, often random, criteria (for example, hunters not wearing a leather loin cloth were not considered to be subsistence hunters) A later amendment –passed without consultation or approval by the people concerned –required subsistence hunters to get annual Special Game Licences. These were terminated by DWNP at the end of the 1990s, partly due to the existence of data showing decline in wildlife numbers and partly due to the view that there was no need to hunt when the government was taking care of San / Basarwa's needs through drought relief schemes. The criminalisation of hunting has turned San / Basarwa into poachers, who now constitute a disproportionately high percentage of the prison population in Botswana (Cassidy *et al.* 2001, Hitchcock 1996, Hitchcock and Bieseke 2000).

San / Basarwa Territoriality

According to Taylor (2000), there are shared elements in traditional tenure systems of various San / Basarwa groups, which make it meaningful to speak of a San / Basarwa territoriality. The following section discusses some of the characteristics of San / Basarwa traditional notions of land ownership and resource management that are emphasised in my sources. It should not be seen as an attempt to convey the more spiritual and religious aspects of their territoriality or sense of place. It is written in present tense, although for many hunting and gathering is more a memory than continued practice.

As described in chapter 1, San / Basarwa communities did traditionally, and to some extent still do, occupy clearly defined territories and have social mechanisms to regulate outsider access and use of the resources in these territories. Land is held by the group (band), and rights to land follow from membership in a group. Ownership or entitlement tends to be expressed as an inherited position in a kinship or social network,

for example indicated by referring to an area as ‘the land of my father’ and not ‘my land’. It is more the *resources* on the land –water sources, wildlife and gathering areas - than the land itself that is carefully guarded (Taylor 2000).

Plants are gathered for food and medicinal purposes, and for making tools and weapons. In addition to plants, gathered foods also include insects, nestlings of birds and other small animals. Hunting is done with spears, dogs, poisoned arrows, traps, snares and sticks, mostly for meat, but also for skins and trading purposes (CMI 1996).

Meat is often shared as it cannot be kept, but gathered foods such as nuts tend to be kept to the family unit. Sources of gathered foods, such as nuts and honey, can also be owned individually. Together with the practice of gift-giving, sharing is seen as important for maintaining good relations and ensuring continued reciprocity in the access to resources (Hitchcock and Bieseke 2000, Taylor 2000).

Fires are set in order to create fresh grazing to attract animals in the dry season, and to encourage the growth of melons. This is probably the most visible (to the outsider) aspect of San / Basarwa’s otherwise inconspicuous environmental management practices (CMI 1996).

Water sources, permanent and seasonal, are the nodal points in traditional territories. They often give name to surrounding features, and join territories. Boundaries between traditional territories are usually imprecise and overlapping, thought of as places of meeting and social connection rather than places of separation. Rainfall and the (seasonal) availability of resources determine the band’s migration. The band congregates when surface water is available, and splits up into smaller family units in the dry season (CMI 1996, Hitchcock and Bieseke 2000, Taylor 2000).

Taylor (2000 and 2003) says that there was considerable flexibility and ambiguity in land tenure arrangements in the pre-colonial period, which was to the benefit of San / Basarwa. In some areas they remained in control because of their familiarity with the environment; their knowledge about the location of water sources and other resources. However, increasing immigration during the colonial period led to the gradual breakdown of San / Basarwa land tenure. Neighbouring groups stopped asking permission to enter territories for purposes of hunting and gathering or grazing, and with time, there was

growing pressure from tourism, cattle and conservation sectors for clear demarcation of land rights.

Saugestad (1998) believes that the mobility of the San / Basarwa, low visible impact of their land use and lack of land ownership in a Western or Tswana sense have been contributing factors to the continuous dispossession of their land. Bishop (1998) argues that the rules of conduct with regard to territories and resources should be considered as San /Basarwa law, as they regulate interaction within and between communities. Still, the stereotypical notion that San / Basarwa lack a system of law or concept of land ownership persists (Ng'ong'ola and Moeletsi 1995).

The Remote Area Development Programme

The main instrument for governing and assimilating the San / Basarwa minority has been the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP), established in 1974. The CKGR relocation is administered by the RADP, and the resettlements outside the CKGR (Kaudwane and New !Xade) also fall under the RADP.

The first years of the RADP's existence (first under the name Bushman Development Programme and later Basarwa Development Programme) were characterised by the fact that programme officials recognised the need for affirmative action to improve the situation of the San / Basarwa, but also that it would be imperative to adapt rhetoric and projects to the official discourse on development and 'non-ethnicity'. The main aim was to secure rights to land and water resources, preferably within traditional areas and without challenging the existing pattern of land distribution. Due to the sensitivity of the issue, the objectives were sought by way of establishing settlements and referring to San / Basarwa's rights as Batswana, not as an ethnic group or First People. Nevertheless, the RADP was repeatedly criticised for practicing separate development (CMI 1996, Hermans 1995, Saugestad 1998).

The programme was consequently renamed Remote Area Development Programme, and the target group redefined as *Remote Area Dwellers (RADs)*, the poorer segment of the rural population living outside established villages. The 'RAD' term has been characterised as an attempt by government to construct an ethnically neutral socio-

economic category, while in effect 3/4 of Remote Area Dwellers are San / Basarwa³⁷, and the 'San- / Basarwa-ness' of the programme is meta-communicated in the definition of the target group by using negations of Tswana culture such as 'non-village residents', non-livestock owners', 'non-Setswana speakers' and so on. The geographical metaphor furthermore constructs people (that is, San / Basarwa) and their places as remote from Botswana society and political power in Gaborone (Cassidy et al. 2001, Hitchcock 1993, Saugestad 1997 and 1998).

In the revised RADP sedentarisation took over as the major objective. The bulk of programme funds was spent on social and physical infrastructure such as permanent water sources, school transport and school hostels, while less funds and attention were directed towards creating employment (although an Economic Promotion Fund was established to promote small scale enterprises), or encouraging administrative and leadership structures such as headmanship. This fact has partly been explained by the low prestige of RADP among politicians and civil servants, in turn relating to the cultural stigma of the people in question and the remoteness of the settlements (Cassidy et al. 2001, CMI 1996, Good 1999, Saugestad 1998).

The RADP settlements - numbering 64 countrywide with a total population of 37,000 - are characterised by high levels of alcohol intake, HIV/Aids rates and other social and health problems, poorly functioning institutions, lack of employment opportunities, and environmental degradation due to population pressure and low resource availability. There have also been reports of improper programme implementation, such as delayed or no food provision or lack of consultation with residents. RADs have in some cases been restricted in their capacity to secure livelihoods, by disallowing the pursuit of small-scale farming where settlements were located in areas designated for livestock production, as politicians feared a possible clash of interest between the RAD farmers and cattle producers (Cassidy et al. 2001, CMI 1996, Good 1999, Saugestad 1998).

The RADP displays the characteristics of a failed social engineering project as described by Scott (1998, discussed in chapter 2). It has reduced the San / Basarwa's possibility and capacity for self-governance, suppressed their skill and initiative and

³⁷ And conversely, 70% of San / Basarwa are RADs.

induced apathy and social withdrawal. Critics of the programme, including academics, NGOs and San / Basarwa spokespersons, have pointed out that it has produced dependence and clientelisation rather than empowerment, and that the reason is the reluctance to accept the ethnic dimension of the issue at hand. Rather, the RAD category implies that poverty, remoteness and a lack of valued Tswana attributes constitute the root of the problem. Nonetheless, politicians and bureaucrats continue to insist that the RADP is intended for all rural poor citizens regardless of ethnic affiliation, and that government cannot support any ethnic-based policies³⁸ (Cassidy *et al.* 2001, CMI 1996, Ditshwanelo Press Statement 23.05.03, Government of Botswana website 2002, Hitchcock 1996, Saugestad 1998 and 2001, Suzman 2001a).

Community Based Natural Resource Management

Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is a government programme intended to decentralise conservation and resource management and involve rural communities to a greater extent in securing their livelihood. CBNRM does not confer land ownership, but formalises limited rights to a large area of land to a community. The programme applies to remote areas with low population and high wildlife densities, which makes it an important policy for San / Basarwa communities in Botswana (Taylor 2003).

The idea of community based conservation arose as a reaction to so-called 'fortress conservation', which excluded local users through legislation, fencing and patrolling. The assumption is that local populations have a strong incentive for sustainable resource management if given a chance to participate in decision-making concerning the use of local territories. Participation will in turn lead to empowerment, as locals bring their knowledge and initiative to the process (Sullivan and Homewood 2003, Taylor 2000).

In Botswana, CBNRM is considered a project for *development*. Taylor (2000) observed that in the communities he studied, visiting government officials would mostly refer to development in the context of CBNRM. Land eligible for CBNRM is Controlled

³⁸ E.g. statements by Director of Primary Education Basiamang, and Co-ordinator of the RADP, Raphaka, during the Khoe and San Development conference in Gaborone, September 2003.

Hunting Areas (CHAs) with associated annual wildlife quotas. It is up to a Community Trust established by residents to decide whether to manage the wildlife quota themselves or whether to sub-lease it to a private safari operator. CBNRM advisers tend to encourage the latter, in order for the community to 'make business from the land'.

Sullivan and Homewood (2003) note the tendency for CBNRM programmes to be essentially top-down in determining what constitutes sustainable practices as well as setting conservation goals. As is the case with the RADP in Botswana, what are political issues -priorities and values in conservation and development, and structural inequalities in the access to land and resources- are presented as technical matters. CHAs are demarcated without any reference to local conceptions of belonging and territoriality, and wildlife quotas are set without consultation with residents. Local knowledge and attitudes are given little consideration, and are in some cases even seen as environmentally detrimental and an obstacle to achieving the programme's objectives. This serves to legitimise the state's intervention to produce 'empowered', 'participating' citizens (Taylor 2000).

The programme's focus on earning cash from wildlife leads to capitalisation of the environment, while forms of land use not geared towards making money are de-emphasised. Taylor (2000) sees the narrowing of options for CBNRM communities as reflecting a wish to simplify administration and increase legibility, next to the strong association between money and 'progress' in the notion of development. Instead of promoting decentralisation, Taylor (*ibid*) concludes that CBNRM has served to extend the influence of the state to communities and lives which were previously little affected by bureaucratic power.

The interests of the tourism industry are also affecting the outcome of CBNRM. In Botswana, the product that is sold to international tourists is *African Wilderness*, purified and Edenic Nature, devoid of people, economics and social relations. 'Bushmen' have only a mysterious, elusive presence in some of the lodges' travel brochures (and occasionally as low-paid staff). Tour operators and lodge owners tend to be negative towards a policy which grants rights to 'ignorant' locals. Again, this reinforces the programme's emphasis on selling rights to external operators rather than developing community projects (Taylor 2000).

In spite of these issues, Bolaane (2001) and Taylor (2000) observed considerable optimism and enthusiasm among the San / Basarwa communities they studied in northern Botswana, for the CBNRM's potential to reinstate what they saw as lost historical rights to land and wildlife. In addition to providing access to land and resources, which is essential for livelihood, social cohesion and dignity, the organisation of community members in CBOs and Trusts has (inadvertently, on government's part) provided people with the means to make claims for *control* over land as well as to contest CBNRM's inherent assumptions of development as an unquestionable, ethnically neutral process. Taylor (2000 and 2003) therefore considers CBNRM to be a crucial political opportunity structure for San / Basarwa communities in Botswana.

Concluding Remarks: San / Basarwa Citizenship

The discussion has shown that discourses of nation-building and development work to eliminate the difference that hunter-gatherers represent, whether in terms of ethnic identity, territorial affiliation or their knowledge of the environment. The San / Basarwa, as people of the bush, are *the others* who authorise images of what is essentially a Tswana model of citizenship, development and modernity. Hunter-gatherers appear in accounts of pre-modern history and as icons in tourist brochures, but they are conveniently erased from the collective imagination of the Botswana nation (Lane 1998, Loomba 1998, Radcliffe and Westwood 1996).

The elimination of difference translates into land legislation and policies, such as rangeland commercialisation under the TGLP and sedentarisation under the RADP, which displace the San / Basarwa and make their territoriality and knowledge of the environment irrelevant and obsolete to the modern nation state. Taylor (2000) points to the injustice in San / Basarwa having an essential source of livelihood (wildlife) declared common property and their rights to hunt severely restricted by the state, while owning livestock is beyond most San / Basarwa's means.

Saugestad (1998) and Taylor (2000) have both concluded that the endeavour to create bureaucratic homogeneity in the management of land, people, and development projects have been to the detriment of San / Basarwa, as individuals and as collective.

Both programmes have had the effect of bringing people who previously were almost independent of the Botswana state into the ambit of state power. In the case of the RADP, introducing unsolicited services and handing out ‘destitute rations’ has turned San / Basarwa into *RADs*: dependent clients of the state. Because efforts at promoting local institutions and leadership largely have failed, there is little scope for the San / Basarwa to articulate their interests and concerns from the RAD settlements. In the case of CBNRM, the logic of state territoriality and centralised planning seeps into what is supposed to be a programme for local empowerment. There is a tendency to dismiss local communities’ knowledge and capacity for resource management in their traditional territories, even though this is against the spirit of CBNRM as idea.

In her analysis of the RADP, Saugestad (1998) coins the phrase “*The Inconvenient Indigenous*” to give a name to the incongruity of indigenism with policy formulation and bureaucratic administration. The difficulty with seeing outside the pre-determined development goals and bureaucratic categories is revealed by the fact that, for CBNRM officials, success tends to be measured in terms of the number of joint ventures set up with external safari companies. For RADP, the programme’s success is quantified in terms of the infrastructure and services introduced in the settlements (Taylor 2000).

I agree with Scott (1998) and Saugestad (*ibid*) that the state’s demand for legibility and simplification in the management of development policies can lead to a blindness to the very differences that in the end will determine the policies’ failure or success, but I also think there is a risk of reductionism. Ethnic blindness comes across as a side effect of a well-intended plan, while it ignores the immense, deliberate discursive work of imagination and re-presentation that goes into the post-colonial nation-building project. The CKGR relocation should be seen as not just part of a rural development programme that failed because it was being too generalistic, but of the effort to realise the vision of the Botswana nation. This is a vision of a nation of developed, modernised citizens, where hunter-gatherers have no place.

However, even where an authoritarian government is putting its full weight behind nation-building and development, there is scope for improvisation and resistance, for *agency*, between the plan and its execution on the ground (Scott 1998). The minority

movement is promoting a citizenship that is multi-ethnic rather than ethnicity-blind, and thus making public expression of ethnic difference more acceptable. Taylor (2000) shows how San / Basarwa are resisting the state legislation and policy by informal means through activities such as poaching³⁹, and more formal means through their community-based organisations created in connection with CBNRM. This comes at a time when questioning the environmental sustainability and economic feasibility of cattle ranching, the symbol of Tswanadom, is becoming more legitimate (Ruud Jansen, pers. comm. 2002).

In the next chapter I consider how the indigenous movement can make a difference to San / Basarwa's citizenship, and to what extent it is making use of the discursive "gaps" between the vision and realisation of the modernised developed nation.

³⁹ Poaching is sometimes legitimised by reference to a primordialist identity; as San / Basarwa are people of the bush, it is in their nature to eat game meat (Taylor 2000).

5. INDIGENOUSNESS DISPUTED

This chapter places indigenousness in the context of southern African identity politics. Since the 1990s, the interests and grievances of Khoe-San groups of the southern African region have been framed as indigenous rights issues by a growing ethno-political movement.

The move from global to southern African indigenism involves governments, publics, academics and the indigenous movement in the production of multi-faceted images of being indigenous, Bushman and San / Basarwa. The last section of the chapter considers how these images are implicated in the interpretative frames of the anti-relocation movement.

From Global to Southern African Indigenism

There is little doubt that the Bushmen, San, Basarwa or Kwe are an indigenous people, according to any reasonable interpretation of the criteria of first arrival, cultural difference and non-dominance. They are also, and increasingly vocally, indigenous by self-description. (Saugestad 1997:293)

The 1990s saw the emergence of a southern African indigenous movement. Several organisations focusing on development, support and advocacy were established, and a number of conferences, consultations and workshops were held on regional and national level. WIMSA (Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa) was established in 1996, with the objective of promoting cultural recognition, political awareness and access to resources for San communities and to serve as an umbrella organisation for San / Basarwa – based NGOs. SASI (the Southern African San Institute) co-ordinates research and serves as a link between international and grassroots organisations, and IPACC (Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee) co-ordinates the representation of African indigenous peoples in international fora (Cassidy et al. 2001, Saugestad 1998).

A significant event for the Botswana indigenous movement was a Botswana Society (a private foundation aimed at stimulating research on Botswana) workshop

entitled *Sustainable Rural Development*, held in Gaborone in 1992. The workshop focused on issues relating to rural development in Botswana - mainly under the rubric of the Remote Area Development Programme. During the session San / Basarwa representatives brought up issues of dispossession and discrimination. Because they were speaking *as* San / Basarwa in their own language Naro, Saugestad (1997) considers this to be a vital act of ethno-political self-identification.

In 1993, the Second International San Conference took place in Gaborone, and subsequent to this the First People of the Kalahari (FPK) was formed. FPK has board members from several San / Basarwa groups and represents a link between grassroots communities and regional and international organisations. FPK spokespersons have attended UNGWIP (United Nations Working Group on Indigenous People) sessions and met with international organisations and representatives of foreign governments on several occasions. It has played a central role in contesting relocations from the CKGR as part of the Negotiating Team (Hitchcock 2002, Hitchcock and Vinding 2001, Saugestad 1998).

Recent events that have been important for the local indigenous movement are the UNHCHR Multiculturalism Workshop in Gaborone in 2002 which brought together indigenous and minority representatives, government representatives, UN experts, and other academics from all over Africa, as well as the Research for Khoe and San Development conference held in Gaborone in 2003.

Saugestad (2002) identifies two stages of mobilisation in the global indigenous movement, the first initiated in the 1960s and 1970s in the West (notably North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Scandinavia), and the second stage in the 1990s, involving African and Asian indigenous peoples. The first stage was characterised by mobilisation from below; the grassroots were actively involved in the construction of an indigenous political identity, which in turn informed the establishment of international organisations and networks as well as the development of legal instruments and norms for the protection of indigenous peoples. During the second stage, events have occurred in the reverse order: from the international to the local level and at a much faster pace, often at the cost of relations with national authorities and the local organisational base. There are now literally empty seats to be filled by African indigenous leaders and spokespersons in

international and regional fora, and financial and logistical support mechanisms in place to enable them to voice their people's concerns. However, Saugestad (*ibid*) notes that a wide support base among indigenous communities and the public nationally is lacking.

Saugestad (2002) says that also in Botswana the pressing need to deal with land rights forced the indigenous movement to leap over the phase of grassroots identity work and deal directly with the legal aspects of indigenesness, without being sufficiently grounded in the local and national context.

Alongside political mobilisation a process of cultural revitalisation is taking place among San / Basarwa in Botswana, which potentially may contribute to a 'grounding' of the indigenous movement. The dance is central to the process of revitalisation, as an important source of ethnic identification and distinction. The dance records events such as hunting and different games, it depicts animals and relates stories, it celebrates togetherness after separation during the dry season, and in the trance dance the individual and the community are healed. The dance is also a means to entertain and communicate to outsiders (for example at events such as the annual Kuru Dance Festival held in D'Kar outside Ghanzi, which brings together dance groups from all over southern Africa to perform) but most of all unites the group itself and San / Basarwa of the region (Ann Gollifer pers. comm. 2005, Guenther 1996).

The cultural revitalisation process is supported by ongoing linguistic research. The objective is to give the various San / Basarwa languages a written form to record oral culture, thus making it easier to prevent language loss and pass on myths, stories and traditions to younger generations⁴⁰.

Indigenesness and Bushman-ness

The experience of colonialism and apartheid has produced a specific set of meanings attached to the term 'indigenous' in southern Africa. Even though Khoe and San are widely recognised as the first inhabitants of the region, governments and publics

⁴⁰ This was discussed during several sessions of the International Conference for Khoe and San Development, Gaborone 2003.

are not necessarily prepared to accept the politicisation of indigenes and the demands which follow thereof (Suzman 2001b, Woodburn 2001).

As I showed to be the case for Botswana in the previous chapter, the scepticism towards policies aimed specifically at indigenous peoples is founded on a concern that any ethnic-based policy will lead to tribalism and political instability in what is seen as a context calling for nation-building emphasising oneness and homogeneity (Saugestad 1998).

In southern Africa (and Africa more generally), 'indigenous' tends to be associated with European colonialism and black-white racism, describing the relationship between colonised native communities and European colonisers. From this perspective indigenes is inapplicable in post-colonial Africa, because independence represented the suspension of the settler – indigenous dichotomy and the oppression by white European settlers of the black African population, whether of Bantu or San / Basarwa origin. On several occasions Botswana politicians have stated that "all Batswana are indigenous to the country" and that no special rights will be awarded to the Basarwa as a group, as differential treatment based on ethnicity is reminiscent of apartheid. During the CIVICUS⁴¹ conference taking place in Gaborone on 22-24 March 2004, President Mogae reiterated the government's position that Botswana would "continue to reject the old colonial apartheid myth that some black communities are more indigenous than others"⁴², in response to foreign criticism of the CKGR relocation (Saugestad 1997 and 1998, Suzman 2001b, Woodburn 2001).

In the minds of many Batswana, there is a strong association between the indigenous concept and Western representations of 'Bushman-ness'. The interest in indigenous politics is often explained as romantic nostalgia for lost roots and a (sometimes perverted) racist obsession with the difference that Bushmen represent, culturally and physically (Ramsay in *The Midweek Sun* 29.05.02, Schrire 1996). Suzman (2001:287) captures this sentiment as follows:

⁴¹ CIVICUS is the World Alliance for Citizen Participation which works towards the promotion of civil society and holds bi-annual world assemblies.

⁴² Quoted in *Mmegi* 26.03.04

The concern for indigenous rights issues in western countries is doubtless[ly] motivated to some degree by a residual mythology of the noble savage and peppered with a healthy dose of postcolonial guilt. Perhaps the plight of peoples like the San attract[s] our attention in the West because, to borrow Ramos' (1993:65) phrase they 'project more eloquently to the West a symbol of the pristine good-life endangered by the brutality of capitalist expansion'.

A Subaltern Other

The image conjured up by the term 'Bushman' is generally not one which is contextualised by a specific history, or by heroic acts, by literature, or by political power struggles. The image is one of physical type or specimen, defined under the rubric of science and of physical anthropology, and then rendered immutable through photography, museum exhibits, popular films, advertisements, novels and popular histories (Skotnes 1996:20).

Skotnes here describes the 'Bushman' as a *subaltern*, a subject never allowed independent agency, always existing in and through the interested representations of others. "The Bushman" was (and is) mainly a Western projection of shifting images and associations that probably had little relation to the lived experiences of the people it circumscribed, but which still has a bearing on the current portrayal of the San / Basarwa as indigenous. The following section describes some of the images of Bushman-ness and the interests they served.

According to Guenther (1996), European travellers in pre-colonial times (hunters, traders, scientists and artists) often expressed admiration for the independence, physique and courage of the Bushmen, resulting in labels such as "the lords of the desert land" and of the "noble savage". These co-existed with the notion of Bushmen as 'primitive savages' in need of European colonialism's civilising effect.

Landau (1996) shows how the introduction of photography established a repertoire of visual connotations –an "iconography"– of Bushman-ness, which had the power both to reinforce and subvert textual discourse. In diorama style photos Bushmen were depicted as living in harmonious coexistence with nature and wildlife, transforming European images of the Bushmen from savages to "harmless people". The Bushmen were brought into a European discourse of nature conservation; they needed to be preserved along with Africa's flora and fauna. Used as a tool in physical anthropology (discussed below), photography contributed to cement racial stereotypes. Later on, ethnographies

were popularised in coffee-table book style publications. What characterised the portraits of the “coffee-table book people” was their lack of individuality or agency. Pictures showed Bushmen engaged in activities that described them as a *collective*, the hunt, motherhood, the dance *etc.*, according to the interest of the ethnographer (*ibid*:138).

The discursive work of photography was supplemented by exhibitions. In the 1800s, there were many instances of Khoe and San being brought to Europe where they were put on display for intrigued audiences and scientists. Well known cases include Sara Baartman –the “Hottentot Venus” and Farini’s “African Pygmies or Dwarf Earthmen”. The latter were displayed in the so-called “missing link exhibition” staged by Farini himself. The Bushmen were often marketed as being on the verge of extinction and belonging to the very lowest of all races (Davies 2003).

The fascination for Bushmen’s bodies inspired studies in anatomy and physical anthropology. The assumption was that the study of “primitive peoples” would provide insight into the development of more civilised “races”. For example, the theory of *pedomorphia* accounted for the supposedly childlike features of the Bushmen, and the theory of *steatopygia* explained their protruding buttocks. Several studies had their subject the length of female *labia minora* and the angle of the penis (Hohmann 2003, Hudelson 1995).

Also human remains were interesting to probing anatomists, particularly if it could be firmly established that the person had been a *real* Khoe (Hottentot) or San (Bushman) in life. ‘Pure’ bodies were particularly valuable to the process of unveiling racial *essence*, because the aim was establish that a racial hierarchy did indeed exist, with the Khoe-San as the lowest of the human form. The interest of science even justified grave robbery as a means to provide specimens from the quickly vanishing race; hence the existence of skulls, skeletons and preserved body parts in many Western museum collections (Morris 1996, Schrire 1996).

Ethnographers have been inspired to study the Bushmen in order to reconstruct early humanity with the conviction that since ‘we’ were all subsistence hunters and gatherers one time, studying the Bushmen teaches us about *our* pre-historic selves and the evolution of human society. The more ‘untamed’ and isolated the Bushmen, the closer

the researcher came to studying primeval man and original human society (Hudelson 1995).

In the South African comedy “The Gods must be crazy” – an international blockbuster - modernity falls from the sky in the shape of a Coke bottle to upset the happy, harmonious existence of a Bushman community. Solway and Lee (1992) see the film as an expression of the fascination with innocent communities’ exposure to modernity, typical of the culture of late capitalism. The underlying and unstated assumption is that hunter-gatherer societies are so fragile that they cannot survive social change.

The fantasy of ‘original man’ next to that of the delicate social and ecological harmony of Bushman society is what Suzman (quote in section above) has in mind when he suggests that it is “postcolonial guilt” that drives Western involvement in the indigenous movement. As the Bushmen represent the origin of humankind, ‘we’ would lose a part of ourselves, our link to the past, if they were to disappear. Given the natural state of harmony of Bushman communities they can be “nursed back” to an original state where the impact of the European colonial presence is erased and the colonialists redeemed (Kuper 2003: page reference missing).

Resisting Bushman-ness

Two analogous cases from South Africa and Botswana about the struggle to have bodily remains and cultural artefacts repatriated from Western museums serve to illustrate the porous boundaries between science and entertainment, and the hypocrisy of ‘indigenous rights’ when they do not involve respect for the identity and history of deceased Africans (Davies 2003).

The most famous case is that of Sara Baartman, a Khoe-Khoe from South Africa who was displayed in freak shows as “Hottentot Venus” on various locations in Europe. After her death in 1816, her skeleton, brain and genitals were kept in the Musée de l’Homme in Paris and finally returned to South Africa in 2002, after 8 years of negotiations with the museum authorities and the French government (Davies 2003).

“El Negro” is the mummy of a man of (probably) Tswana origin who was robbed from his grave in 1830. The mummy was displayed in a taxidermist shop in Paris with

the label “Bechuana” (a Tswana person from the area around Orange River, on the border between today’s Botswana and South Africa) before it was sold to a natural historian from Barcelona. While on display in the municipal museum of Banyoles, Catalonia, the mummy went under the name “El Negro” (a black African person), but at some point was transformed into “El Bosquimano” (The Bushman). The process to have the remains returned to Africa took several years and was met with fierce resistance from the mayor and population of Banyoles, who considered El Negro to be their very own African. The (incomplete) remains were handed over to Botswana in 2000 for burial (Davies 2003, Parsons 2000).

The identity of El Negro has been the subject of controversy and research in Botswana, and in the process of establishing his origin he has represented the African, the Tswana and the Bushman all in one. Sara Baartman and El Negro have become symbols of African resistance to constructions of “indigenous people” as objects of knowledge and desire for Western audiences.

Post-Apartheid Multiculturalism

Under apartheid in South Africa, Khoe-San groups were subsumed under the culturally heterogeneous ‘Coloureds’ category, and with time it was generally assumed that Khoe and San were extinct as distinctive cultural communities. The context of debating multiculturalism and national identity in the ‘new’ post-apartheid South Africa has enabled Khoe and San to revitalise and reinvent indigeness. A significant act of official symbolic recognition was the inclusion in 2000 of rock painting symbols and the slogan ‘Unity in Diversity’ in the /Xam language, in the new South African coat of arms (Mattes 1999, Robins 2001, Woodburn 2001).

Under the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994 land rights can be granted in cases where groups have been dispossessed or involuntarily relocated. From government it is made clear that this is not a policy designed specifically for indigenous peoples; the cut-off date is 1913, signalling that it is intended for all South Africans who suffered injustices as a result of modern day racially discriminatory practices. Nonetheless, successful land claims for Khoe-San groups can provide an essential basis for the survival of indigenous identities and set the precedence for other San land claims in the

region. I only include one example here, as it is emphasised by Ditshwanelo (of the CKGR Negotiating Team) as an important parallel to the CKGR case (Boyce 1999, Suzman 2001b and 2003).

In 1999, the Khomani San were granted land by the South African government within and outside the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park (on the south-western border with Botswana; see Map 1.1). Ditshwanelo (2002c) considers the land claim process as a model of how the government and indigenous movement *can* co-operate to achieve a mutually beneficial result. Ditshwanelo emphasises the extensive negotiations conducted with reference to international human rights and conservation instruments, and the fact that the South African government was willing to review and update its nature conservation and national parks policies to also accommodate cultural heritage and the interests of local populations⁴³.

Developments in the African Commission for Human Rights

Indigenous issues were only included on the ordinary agenda of the African Commission for Human Rights in 2000, and the following year the Working Group of Experts on the Rights of Indigenous Populations / Communities (henceforth: Working Group) was established. Its mandate was to arrive at a conceptual framework for understanding indigeneness in an African context, analyse the implications of the African Charter (discussed below) for indigenous communities, and consider how the rights of indigenous communities should be protected and promoted on the continent. It was also agreed that indigenous representatives would have a platform to speak on every ordinary session of the Commission. The Working Group's report was adopted by the Commission in 2003 and made available to the public as recently as 2004.

Concerning the appropriateness of 'indigenous' as a concept and political identity for Africa, the Working Group makes the following points:

- The fact that African groups of hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralists (present or former) have participated in the international indigenous movement for over a decade should be recognised.

⁴³ There are commentators who are more critical in their assessment of the land claim, as I will show below.

- ‘Indigenous’ should not be dismissed as an irrelevant concept simply because it was first used to describe a colonial situation; domination and oppression of minority groups takes place also in post-colonial African states.
- ‘Indigenous’ does not narrowly refer to aboriginality and first arrival, although critique of the concept tends to focus solely on this aspect.

Concerning the utility of the African Charter to indigenous peoples in Africa the Working Group argues:

- The 1981 African Charter of Human and Peoples’ Rights was influenced by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but has greater emphasis on what is considered specifically African traditions and values. *Peoples’ rights* refer both to the right to sovereign self-determination as well as the significance of the community in African life.
- The African Charter must be interpreted in its political context. Initially the term *peoples* served to give legitimacy to the decolonisation struggle, but the current (post-colonial) reality is that there is a need to promote and protect the human rights of vulnerable groups and peoples on the continent.
- Where the UN operates with a hierarchy of rights (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights –ICCPR- being the 1st generation, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights –ICESCR- being 2nd generation, and minority and indigenous instruments -collective rights- are 3rd generation) the African Charter does not make this distinction. The use of *peoples* in the Charter implies that it is an instrument intended also to protect collective rights.
- Recent cases handled by the African Commission have created precedence for protecting and promoting collective rights, for example by accepting cases which involve human rights violations of *peoples* and by linking violations of individuals with that of groups.

- The African Charter's Articles 19 – 22 provide a good resource for the protection of indigenous peoples' rights⁴⁴. These articles deal with peoples' rights to freedom of domination by other groups, the right to self-determination, the right to natural resources and property, the right to development and the right to culture and identity.
- The African Charter's Article 60 states that the African Commission should base itself on international law. This implies that when dealing with cases concerning people who define themselves as indigenous, the Commission should refer to the principles of instruments such as ILO Convention no. 169. Even though no African state has ratified the Convention it forms part of international law and must be taken into consideration.

The Working Group's report (and its establishment in the first instance) must be seen as a crucial development for the African indigenous movement. The emerging discourse of African indigenesness is an important contribution to postcolonial debates of democracy and human rights in Africa, and it makes it less easy and convenient for African leaders to dismiss indigenesness as an irrelevant Eurocentric invention.

Academic Perspectives on San / Basarwa Identity and Indigenesness

Being indigenous is an ill-defined and precarious status. The legal concept is complex and contentious. Despite its global intentions, it is clearly not designed with the African experience foremost in mind. [...] This cannot and should not keep us from addressing the concept, examining it, and while recognising its shortcomings make use of the potentials. (Saugestad 1997:300)

The Kalahari Debate

Anthropologists, archaeologists, linguists and historians diverge about the degree of isolation of San / Basarwa groups from other groups in the southern African region, as well as the level of dependence on hunting and gathering for their sustenance through history. "The Kalahari Debate" started as a reaction to the ethnographic studies carried

⁴⁴ The Working Group also mentions Articles 2, 3 and 5, but these describe specifically *individual* rights, such as the right to dignity and equality.

out by anthropologists throughout the 1960s and 70s, which tended to present San / Basarwa groups as pure, isolated and traditional hunter-gatherer communities, uncontaminated by modernity and change⁴⁵. In response to this so-called traditionalist view, the revisionists argued –inspired by Marxist political economy - that rather than looking at individual groups one must consider the socio-economic system of the Kalahari and the wider southern African region, in which different groups were integrated in a highly unequal fashion. San / Basarwa were persistently at the bottom of the social hierarchy, and were involved in trade, pastoralism and farm labour according to the prevailing circumstances. The traditionalists created the image of the *'hunter-gatherer'* as custodian of inherited indigenous ecological knowledge and social practices, while the revisionists created the image of an impoverished underclass of *'hunters, clients and squatters'* (Barnard 1996, Hudelson 1995, Saugestad 1998).

According to Taylor (2000 and pers. comm. 2004), the reason why the Kalahari debate could go on for so long, resulting in over 300 articles in scientific journals, was that it was more a polemic between researchers than it was a dialogue between San / Basarwa and researchers. Barnard (1996) suggests in retrospective that we think of these perspectives as partial accounts and fragmented truths, which must be supplemented with San / Basarwa's self-representations.

First Arrival and 'True' Indigenousness

The Kalahari Debate was never about whether the San / Basarwa could legitimately call themselves indigenous. However, the arguments and evidence of the revisionist perspective are being used to refute indigenousness, as it is more compatible with the official image of Botswana's 'ethnic omelette' and the view that Basarwa's problem is one of physical remoteness rather than cultural separateness. In a series entitled "CKGR in History" printed in The Midweek Sun newspaper in April and May 2002, historian and columnist Jeff Ramsay⁴⁶ offers his perspective on indigenousness as a contribution to the ongoing relocation debate:

⁴⁵ Some of the publications referred to in the debate include Lorna Marshall's and Richard Lee's studies of the !Kung, and George Silberbauer's and Jiro Tanaka's work on the G/wi and G//ana of the CKGR. On the revisionist side, Wilmsen's "Land Filled with Flies: A Political Economy of the Kalahari" is the most significant (Barnard 1996).

⁴⁶ Ramsay has presented and popularised Botswana history in several publications and has an authoritative and respected voice in Botswana public life. In May 2003 he was appointed Deputy Senior Private and Press Secretary to

In the CKGR context, outsiders have identified the indigenous population as being either “Bushmen” or “San”, external labels that, along with “Basarwa”, do not have any precise ethno-linguistic definition. Explicit in their belief that Bushmen are the owners of the country is the assumption that other local residents are somehow less than indigenous latecomers. Thus we find Survival International Director Stephen Corry recently asserting (Mmegi 19/4/02): “...that the Basarwa are undoubtedly the original inhabitants of what is now Botswana: they have been there for at least 20,000 years, and perhaps longer. The various Tswana tribes only moved into the eastern most part of the country less than four centuries ago.” Most professional historians would reject the above, recognising that ethno-linguistic identity, much less affiliation to a particular *merafe* or to use the language of the colonial oppressor “tribe”, is evolutionary. In the process of being absorbed into other groups individuals and wider communities have been constantly transformed. [...] Mythical notions of tribal or ethnic purity are fundamentally rooted in the nineteenth century discourse of European nationalism and imperialism. Indeed, the very origins of the terms “Batswana” and “Basarwa”, along with many others such as “Bakalanga”, are all contested, calling into further question their usefulness in attempts to establish who came first. (The Midweek Sun 24.04.02)

There is [...] no correlation between DNA and language on the continent and thus no basis for trying to draw a genetic boundary between Khoisan speakers (Basarwa) and any other Africans. The notion of southern Africa having been populated by separate “red” or “Bushmanoid” and “black” or “Negroid” races is a nineteenth century European racial fantasy. Put another way, all of Botswana’s peoples have been part of a greater “omelette” since the very beginnings of human existence. (The Midweek Sun 01.05.02)

In Ramsay’s opinion, the claim to indigenusness is premised upon a Western fantasy of cultural isolation and continuous land occupancy since time immemorial, which results in a static, essentialised picture of a history characterised by migrations and variable adaptations and identities. As a professional historian he is in a position to reject the idea of a San / Basarwa or Khoe-San ethnicity transcending the individual ethno-linguistic group: there are no Khoe-San *peoples*, only Khoe-San *speakers*. Another piece of evidence to refute a ‘red versus black ethnicity is the fact that there is no systematic genetic difference between Khoe-San and other Africans.

The implication of Ramsay’s deconstruction is the rejection of indigenusness altogether, as a Eurocentric concept invalid for Botswana and Africa. One might just as well say ‘All Batswana are indigenus’ as ‘No Batswana are indigenus’; there is no

the President, with among other things the responsibility for handling the press in connection with the relocation conflict and the government’s Diamonds for Development campaign. (Daily News, 06.05.03) I believe the appointment can be considered an official stamp of approval of Ramsay’s analysis with regard to indigenusness.

legitimate foundation for political mobilisation based on indigenusness. A paradox in his argument is that he criticises the indigenous concept for not taking the constructed and dynamic nature of identities into consideration, while at the same time he is denying San / Basarwa an ethnic identity that does not correspond to DNA, ethno-linguistics and his interpretation of historical facts.

Sidsel Saugestad, who has published extensively on ethno-political mobilisation among the San / Basarwa in Botswana, is warning against a debate of indigenusness centring on the question of first arrival. In her opinion, the utility of the indigenous concept lies in its capacity to elucidate relations of power between minority and state / majority, and how these relations may be played out in a given situation. By focussing on power relations on the “interface between groups” (2001:307), one can avoid the tendency to essentialise or search for objective evidence in history or archaeology. The San / Basarwa are indigenous people, not ‘in themselves’ but by virtue of their relationship with the Botswana state, as sedentarisation and land dispossession in combination with a history of oppression and stigmatisation have produced a clientelised and impoverished group of people:

First, and foremost, ‘indigenous’ is a relational term: a group is only indigenous in relation to another encompassing group, which define the dominant structures of the state. The meaning thus depends on context [...] not in a strict listing of criteria and a definition of form, but in a persistent focus on the relationship between indigenous peoples and the encompassing national state. (Saugestad 2001:306)

As opposed to historian Ramsay, Saugestad does not think the absence of absolute identities stretching back endlessly in time invalidates indigenusness as a political project for the San / Basarwa. Even though she is cautioning against freezing San / Basarwa identity in time and place, she sees the main challenge of the indigenous movement as identifying and communicating their commonalities. The external resources of the international indigenous rights discourse are already in place, but a common ground must be mobilised and negotiated within the local context, across dispersed communities, variable adaptations and mutually unintelligible languages:

The debate can probably gain less from looking at the past, than from considering the shared experiences of being indigenous in the contemporary situation. [...] It is probably this kind of shared experience, more than any specific criteria connected with language, foraging or physiognomy...which constitutes the main difference between Bantu⁴⁷ and Basarwa. The division stems from a shared experience that up to the present time being categorised as Basarwa has mainly meant disadvantages, dispossession and despair. [...] Theoretically, it is easy to argue that a shared experience of being Basarwa in contemporary Botswana may form the basis for a process of ethnic incorporation. In practice, however, to find and define this *common ground*, and to translate it into an agenda for action, presents a formidable challenge for the emerging ethnopolitical movement. It requires a strategy that simultaneously emphasises common values and aspirations, and overcomes the practical problems of communication over large distances.” (Saugestad 1998:61-63, emphasis in original)

A San / Basarwa Collective Identity?

Taylor’s (2000) “Life, Land and Power: Contesting development in northern Botswana” is an anthropological study of how San / Basarwa ethnicity and identity shape the outcome of development projects initiated by the state. His thesis does not concern indigenism or indigenous politics as such, but can provide some ethnographic substance to Saugestad’s abstract “common ground”. His analysis serves to question Ramsay’s contention that collective San- / Basarwa-ness is a purely external invention without any foundation in ‘lived’ identities.

Taylor describes how the stories of origin of San / Sesarwa speakers resemble each other and thus provide a basis for a collective ethnic identity. According to legend, Khara/’uma was the progenitor of all San / Basarwa, the first person put on earth by God. Tales of Khara/’uma vary, but all make a perceptual opposition between *us* and *them*; San / Basarwa as hunter-gatherers and others as agro-pastoralists. Taylor found that in the communities he studied, San / Basarwa tend to speak of themselves and others in essentialist, sometimes primordialist, terms. The self-designation ‘People of the bush’ shows the continued symbolic significance of hunting and gathering to distinguish San / Basarwa from others, while ‘People of poverty’ reveals an internalisation of their underclass status: having no money has become a defining feature of what it means to be San / Basarwa in contemporary Botswana. Both designations cut across difference in

⁴⁷ Saugestad (1998) uses the term ‘Bantu’ rather than Tswana to describe San / Basarwa – majority relations in Botswana because ‘Bantu’ also incorporates other ethnic groups with a similar linguistic background and pastoralist adaptation.

language and geography between the various San / Basarwa groups and point to a shared ethnicity.

The construction of ethnicity is thus strongly related to perceptions of how livelihood is procured. The way of *Sesarwa* is that of the bush, of *Setswana* it is cattle and of *Sekgoa* (European / white) it is money. Ethnic categorisations reflect stereotypes and not embodied realities, as most San / Basarwa combine strategies from the three imaginary 'life worlds' to secure their livelihood.

Taylor sees the stories of origin and distinctiveness as providing a hermeneutic framework for presenting and negotiating identity in changing political, material circumstances. His interest is thus not in *absolute* difference between San / Basarwa and others, but how their *narratives* of difference are used to negotiate rights and concessions in the face of state policies for development and competing claims for land for tourism, conservation and cattle production. From this perspective the San / Basarwa do not represent a fragile way of life or identity that needs to be hermetically preserved. What they need is acknowledgement for the ways they inscribe their territories and landscapes with meaning, and continued access to livelihoods (that is, land and the resources of the land).

It should be added to this that even though it is meaningful to speak of a collective identity as San / Basarwa, being indigenous may not be a *primary* source of everyday identity, such as belonging to a linguistic community, a band or family unit, or a traditional territory (Saugestad 1998). Indigenusness should be considered as a political vehicle for San / Basarwa groups to continue living and identifying with their linguistic community, band or territory –and as members of a wider community of San nationally and regionally. There does not have to be any contradiction between these levels of identification.

First Peoples - Marginalised Minorities

An academic conference held in Edinburgh in 2000 was entitled "Africa's Indigenous Peoples: 'First Peoples' or 'Marginalised Minorities'?"⁴⁸. The heading captures a divergence in analysis and opinion between scholars and NGOs engaged in the

⁴⁸ Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, 2001.

African⁴⁹ indigenous movement. While ‘First People’ refers to indigenous peoples’ ancient historical tie to their lands, their cultural distinctiveness from the majority and as such inherent collective rights, ‘Marginalised Minorities’ focuses on the extreme degree of poverty, social problems, stigmatisation and political exclusion experienced by indigenous communities on the continent. While ‘First People’ is about a difference and separateness which does not easily lend itself to representation in the language of public administration and national development, ‘Marginalised Minorities’ suggests an involuntary exclusion, existence at the margins of public conscience and national society, at the very bottom of the social ladder.

Both approaches regard indigenouness as a political identity and indigenous rights as a potential resource whose merits must be evaluated in each given case for each given group. The issue is thus not whether or not a group qualifies as indigenous, but rather what is the most appropriate avenue for addressing their needs and facilitating development. It should be noted that the distinction is more a matter of emphasis than a clear-cut opposition between *culture* and *class* (Sylvain 2002), the point is that it has consequences for the type of conclusions that are made with regard to strategy or framing.

Suzman (2001b:276) provides the following list of hardships experienced by the San of Southern Africa (this is a slightly abbreviated version):

- A widespread lack of *de jure* land rights and equitable access to natural resources
- High levels of extreme poverty and dependency on welfare in the form of food aid or pensions
- Low levels of basic literacy and numeracy, compounded by poor school attendance and high drop-out rates

⁴⁹ Most of the contributors are in fact writing from South Africa and Botswana, but some conclusions and observations concern other parts of the continent or Africa as a whole.

- Poor basic health care, squalid living conditions, high incidence of social problems (particularly alcohol-related) and living expectancies considerably lower than national averages
- High levels of unemployment and a widespread reliance on piecemeal and casual labour
- Weak representation in political or administrative structures and limited capacity to advocate their political interests at a national, regional or local level
- A sense of social and political alienation from the mainstream, compounded in some instances by social discrimination and prejudice

These are the ‘hard facts’ of indigenouness in southern Africa, based on country-wise studies done in a recent study commissioned by the EU: *Regional Assessment of the Situation of San Peoples in Southern Africa*. The list is significant in that it emerges from a concerted effort to collect and present information about San and also in that it consolidates the regional connection; with only a few exceptions San experience the same kind of problems all over southern Africa. They are unemployed, uneducated, impoverished and socially and politically marginalised.

In Suzman’s (2001a, 2002/3a) opinion there is no indication that southern African governments are about to accede to ILO Convention No. 169 or a forthcoming Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and it would therefore be more productive to promote these groups’ case with basis in a “more straightforward human rights framework” of justice and equality. He notes, somewhat cynically, that: “the label ‘indigenous’ has joined the vocabularic arsenal necessary to secure the funds of donors” (2001a:273) and that it therefore has a monetary as well as political component, but equally important is having the goodwill of governments when pursuing the interests of the San in the region.

Sylvain’s (2002) concern is that indigenouness (or “indigeneity”) in the southern African context tends to be presented as a primordialist link between identity and place, excluding the role of the political economy and social relationships in shaping cultural beliefs and practices. She finds evidence for this tendency in documents produced by

institutions such as IPACC (Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee), in academic articles and from analysing the strategies of indigenous organisations involved in projects in Namibia and South Africa. When identity and land are ontologically connected, the loss of land (through encroachment or relocation) is seen as *culture* loss, and indigenous politics becomes severed from the politics of class. What she calls the “cultural survival” agenda of the indigenous movement is too much about securing land rights in order to restore idealised hunting and gathering lifestyles, but Sylvain argues – from a study of the Omaheke San in Namibia- that the struggle for land and resources is more a struggle for economic justice, employment and political representation than it is for cultural survival.

In another example from South Africa, both Sylvain (2002) and Robins (2001) caution against framing indigeneness in too ‘rooted’ and static terms. Through a land claim in the courts, the Khomani San were granted land by the South African government within and outside the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park from which they had been evicted in 1973. The land claim was legitimised by mobilising a myth of community and collective identity, but in the post-settlement phase attempts to realise the myth was driven too much by Western donor agencies’ conceptions of the pristine hunter-gatherer ‘Bushman’. International funding to the local indigenous movement went predominantly towards culture projects which emphasised continuity with the hunter-gatherer past through language and ‘bush knowledge’, at the expense of economic livelihood projects. In Robins’ (*ibid*) opinion, the Bushman image limited the local organisations’ scope for directing the course of community development, as well as the avenues for articulating indigeneness or San-ness as a living, dynamic identity. He therefore concludes that more focus on livelihood strategies would have reduced conflict levels and made for a more viable community construction.

Woodburn (2001:5) on the other hand, believes there is potential for indigenous communities and organisations in Africa to further the symbolism of first arrival and “develop [it] into a political claim with a strong symbolic and moral component”. Because ‘indigenous’ generates such hostility it is better to use the term ‘First People’ when campaigning within Africa. If they can establish some degree of legitimacy for their status as first peoples, this can then be used to further their rights in legal terms.

From the perspective of Botswana, Taylor (pers. comm. 2004 and 2005) considers indigenusness to be a useful conceptual tool for analysing the situation of the San / Basarwa. His conclusions about San / Basarwa collective identity (Taylor 2000; discussed above) could furthermore be taken to support a claim to indigenusness. However, given the degree of ethnic stigma of the Basarwa in Botswana society Taylor sees little scope for mobilising for land and resources on the basis of a ‘first people’ identity. He believes the most productive approach is to use a discourse of poverty and marginalisation when engaging the Botswana government.

Saugestad (1998 and 2001) meanwhile, believes in the transformative potential of the first people discourse, if it is framed to suit the Botswana context. If development is pursued as a matter of alleviating poverty and providing social infrastructure without building on the values, knowledge and wishes of the people concerned, it can easily produce dependence and clientelisation instead of empowered citizens, as the experience with the RADP has shown. If San / Basarwa were recognised as cultural communities with their own representative bodies, governments would be obligated to recognise their leadership and respect their decisions.

The Anti-Relocation Movement

In chapter 2 I said that the meta-narrative of indigenusness provides an enabling fiction, a starting point for indigenous activism. In this section I use the concept of *interpretative frame* (Tarrow 1998 and della Porta and Diani 1999) to designate the more specific, strategic representations of the actors of the anti-relocation movement.

Survival International’s Strategy and Interpretative Frame

An Unpolluted Witness

Survival founds its work on two basic rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, established by ILO Convention no. 169: The right to communal ownership of land and the right to self-determination. Its anti-relocation campaign is aimed to discredit the Botswana government internationally and thus put pressure on politicians to change the relocation policy. It has involved vigils, writing letters to senior politicians, newspaper

advertisements, letters to local newspapers and more recently, encouraging an international tourism boycott of Botswana. SI distributes frequent newsletters via e-mail, and has a well managed website containing its own statements, those of Botswana politicians and CKGR residents, as well as articles from the Botswana and international press (www.survival-international.org).

When asked about the campaign's target group, the response was "the public in the widest sense" (Jonathan Mazover, personal e-mail 29.08.03). Although SI did not provide a demographic or geographical profile of their supporters, it is probably correct to say that they are predominantly 'Western'. SI's advertisements were printed in Australian, Belgian and Canadian papers, and vigils have been held predominantly in European cities.

Survival's claim to representativity and objectivity stems from their capacity to be on the ground and around the globe simultaneously. By 'on the ground' is meant that they make field visits to needing communities; 'around the globe' refers to SI's experience from a wide range of countries and cases, enabling the organisation to compare cases and identify those which may benefit the most from a campaign.

Survival exists simply to amplify the concerns of tribal peoples on an international level. Everything we say comes from the people concerned and is driven by them – we work on this campaign because the people concerned have asked us to do so. We work closely with Basarwa's organizations, and are extremely careful that all our statements originate with the Basarwa on the ground in CKGR or in the resettlement camps at New !Xade and Khaudwane. [...] It is very important to listen to what the Basarwa themselves are saying – they want to remain on their own land, where their ancestors are buried. And by every principle of natural justice, as well as under international law, they have the right to. They want to be allowed to live their own way of life, and direct their own development. The government is violating their human rights by imposing on them their own plans, which the Basarwa oppose and which are proving disastrous. Many Batswana (and many citizens of other countries around the world) are expressing their shock at what the government is doing to these people. (Letter to the Editor by Survival International Campaigns Assistant Miriam Ross, Mmegi 10.01.03)

The 'campaign' is not Survival's but [the Bushmen's], and we have expended a great deal of time and effort in ensuring we know what they want, and they know what they are doing. We believe we have spent much more time actually on the ground talking to the CKGR Bushmen than most of the local NGOs. We have collected a huge amount of material in the form of interviews and testimonies and so on (Jonathan Mazover, Survival International, personal e-mail 29.08.03).

In these quotes, Survival presents itself as a witness and a listener, an unpolluted transmitter of indigenous peoples' grievances. The fact that statements originate from local residents and have been recorded in great quantity vouches for their authenticity. By amplifying the voices of indigenous communities, their concerns can be given an international audience and the necessary leverage to persuade governments to comply with international human rights instruments –first and foremost ILO Convention No. 169.

The second quote suggests that Survival knows better what the Bushmen want than the “local NGOs” (that is, the Negotiating Team), having spent more time with the Bushmen “on the ground”.

Beyond the reference to “local NGOs” in what was a reply to a direct question from me, Survival's website contains no information about the Negotiating Team's effort in the relocation conflict. The omission creates the impression that Survival is the CKGR residents' sole advocate and only hope to return to their land.

The Meta-Narrative of Indigenousness

Although positioning itself as an unadulterated witness, Survival International is actively constructing and disseminating its particular version of the relocation conflict. A placard from a Survival vigil in Paris (picture 5.1) poses the question “Diamonds or Bushmen?”, suggesting a fundamental opposition between capital and culture – and that the government of Botswana has chosen the former at the expense of an ancient hunter-gatherer culture.

We know of no place anywhere in the world where tribal peoples have been removed unless there is something on their land which their government or mining companies have wanted. [...] There are very important diamond deposits in this area, on Bushman land. We are pretty sure that this is linked with future diamond exploitation. (Director of Survival International Stephen Corry, “The Bushmen's Last Dance” September 2002)



Picture 5.1: “Diamants ou Bushmen?”: From vigil in Paris, February 2002.
Source: www.survival-international.org.

Corry’s statement was later underpinned by a detailed fact sheet and a press release containing maps from the Botswana’s Department of Geological Survey, revealing a great increase in the number of concessions for diamond explorations in the CKGR since the start of the relocation (Survival International 2003, SI Press Release 20.03.03). The fact sheet was entitled “Bushmen aren’t forever”; a play with words intended to demonstrate the frailty of San / Basarwa culture and identity in the face of the strong interests of the diamond industry.

By associating the relocation with diamond exploitation the fate of the San / Basarwa is articulated within the meta-narrative of indigenusness: The CKGR case is a typical example of the relationship between nation states and indigenous peoples, where economic growth comes before the rights of cultural minorities.

The text of the “Stone Age Creatures?” and “Botswana Diamonds Bushmen Despair” (Pictures 5.2 and 5.3) presents the relocation as aggressive and violent, using phrases such as “driving them out”, “dumping them”, “brutally evicted” and “forced them into resettlement camps”. Saying ‘camps’ as opposed to just ‘resettlements’ or ‘relocation settlements’ evokes images of refugee camps in times of war. It also underlines the forced nature of the relocation, as no one ever freely chooses to leave their home and become a refugee.

Human Rights, “Civilisation” and Internal Colonialism

Civilisation is in reverse direction in Botswana. The authorities' treatment of the Basarwa is the most damaging thing to have happened there since your great nation was born, an island beacon of freedom and peace surrounded by a sea of conflict. (Director of Survival International Stephen Corry in Letter to the Editor, Mmegi 08.03.02)

The immediate association generated by Corry's statement is that of Western NGOs as guarantors of global human rights. As was mentioned in chapter 2, many commentators have pointed out that human rights have become the new 'civilising mission' of the West, with NGOs and governments placing Africa under constant surveillance and control (Ahluwalia 2001, Mohan and Holland 2001).

Corry's statement rests on Survival's Western supporters' assumption about African governments' disregard for human rights. Civilisation was what Europe had and Africa did not – it was lack of civilisation that legitimised colonisation. By passing judgement on the degree of civilisation in an African country, Corry is replicating the imbalance of power that characterised the relation between coloniser and colonised. He also refers to Botswana's exceptionalism in African terms, as though to imply that if indigenous rights are not even adhered to in a country like Botswana –“the island beacon of freedom and peace in a sea of conflict”- there is little hope for the rest of the continent.

In a later column by Corry 'Civilisation' appears in quotation marks, signifying a reflexive and moral distancing from the term. Instead, it is the Botswana government's treatment of the San / Basarwa that has character of internal colonialism:

'Civilisation' once decreed that everyone should leave their state of 'primitive ignorance' and become like their colonial 'masters'. The British empire was one of the highest embodiments of this arrogant and racist position, but many, perhaps most, dominant peoples have felt the same about minority cultures, and this is position is openly adopted by the Botswana government today about the Basarwa (Director of Survival International Stephen Corry in Letter to the Editor, The Botswana Gazette, 9.10.02).

The Harmless People

On the Survival International website the San / Basarwa are introduced as follows:

The Bushmen are hunter-gatherers, who for thousands of years supported themselves in the desert through these skills. They hunt - mainly various kinds of antelope - but their daily diet has always consisted more of the fruits, nuts and roots which they seek out in the desert. They make their own temporary homes from wood that they gather. Many Bushmen who have been forced off their lands now live in settlements in areas that are unsuitable for hunting and gathering - they support themselves by growing some food, or by working on ranches. (www.survival-international.org)

In other words, San / Basarwa are hunter-gatherers as they have been for “thousands of years”, except in cases where they have been forcefully displaced from their territories and have taken up agriculture or farm labour as a substitute.

The introduction serves to create a simple picture from a situation characterised by a variety of adaptations, choices and destinies. It suggests that had it not been for external forces, the Bushmen would have continued hunting and gathering for another thousand years. It frames the CKGR conflict as primarily a question over the San / Basarwa’s right to continue hunting and gathering as they have done since time immemorial, the right to cultural survival. Linked to this is the celebration of hunting and gathering as the only way of engaging with the environment while maintaining harmony between nature and culture. Without the hunter-gatherers, these inhospitable areas would remain “empty” (Kuper 2003):

A hunting and gathering lifestyle is not 'primitive' – anthropologists now recognise it as an intelligent reaction to an otherwise inhospitable climate. Indeed, in many parts of the world, hunting and gathering allow human populations to inhabit areas that would otherwise remain empty – not just deserts, but, for instance, parts of the Arctic and tropical rainforest as well. Hunting in a place like the Kalahari requires a truly sophisticated set of skills. (SI director Stephen Corry, Mmegi 08.03.02)

The text accompanying the “Stone Age Creatures?” advertisement (picture 5.2) has an ominous ring to it, as it is not the remaining CKGR residents that are being moved out, but the “last of the Bushmen”. Just as the extinction of the Bushman *race* was predicted to be imminent, it is now the Bushman *culture* that is threatened with extinction. Culture in Survival’s interpretative frame becomes *inheritance*, a bound entity which is either passed on in its original form, or obliterated. The motif of the forever

vanishing Bushmen has long existed in ethnographic texts and popular culture, and more lately, in the texts of tourist brochures (Kuper 2003, Landau 1996, Taylor 2000).

The cultural genocide caused by relocation marks the destruction of a culture which “adds greatly to the diversity of humankind”⁵⁰. The Bushmen’s culture has a function not just for the G//ana and G/wi, but to all of us. If the Bushmen were to disappear ‘we’ would lose a part of our own identity and history, our pre-modern selves (Barnard 1996).

Landau (1994:140) says about pictorial discourse that “[V]isual images are often re-used or re-worked simply because they are recognisable. Re-used pictures can implicate a wide subject (say, ‘Bushmen’) in a powerful or fraught way before they say anything specific”. In Survival’s advertisements the use of familiar “coffee-table” iconography has implicated the Bushmen as silent *others*, even before the recipient has read the accompanying text. In the pictures the Bushmen are busy being themselves, as innocent playful children (unaware of the racist remarks their President has made about them⁵¹; picture 5.2) and in passive “despair” over their fate (picture 5.3). The ‘harmless people’ return in these advertisements; they are victimised, they have abandoned all hope and need someone to speak their case.

Meanwhile, the mobilising message intended for potential indigenous supporters and activists is that “You can save the Gana and Gwi from destruction” (picture 5.3, my emphasis), the “you” being Europeans depicted on street corners in Paris, London and Milan holding placards with slogans (e.g. picture 5.1).

The text in the “Stone Age Creatures?” advertisement proclaims that “*The Bushmen just want to live on their land in peace*”. Again, Survival is speaking *all* Bushmen’s case (not only that of the G/wi and G//ana) as they all have the same request: “to live on their land in peace”. This statement can evoke different associations with the reader. One is the stereotypical image of Bushmen as ‘harmless’ and peace-loving people, who will tend to respond to aggression from the state and profit-seeking mining

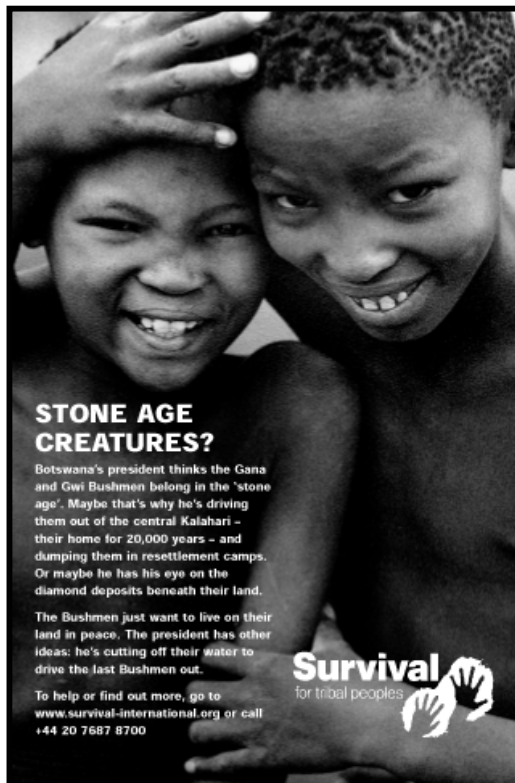
⁵⁰ SI Director Stephen Corry speaking about G//ana and G/wi culture in “The Bushmen’s Last Dance”, 2002.

⁵¹ This refers to the much quoted statement by (then) Vice President Mogae, saying that the Basarwa must stop living with the flora and fauna like “stone age creatures”. The statement is re-cycled as a rhetorical question in Survival’s newspaper advertisement.

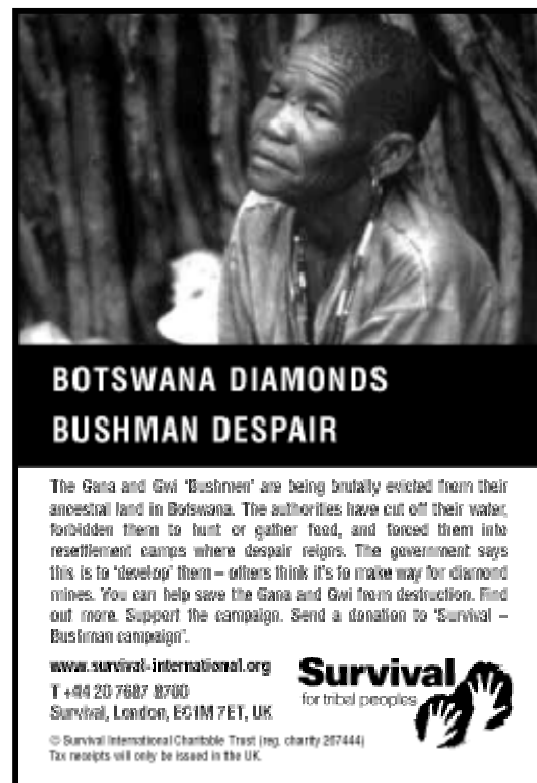
companies with withdrawal, and hence needing someone to fight their battles for them. The second may be the expectation that indigenous peoples require isolation from the external world in order to maintain their cultural distinctiveness. This unites the Bushmen with the world community of indigenous peoples in their struggle for land and cultural survival (Kuper 2003).

On Survival's website, the voices of the G//ana and G/wi are presented as a unified chorus condemning the relocation, thus differences in experiences, priorities and opinions among present and former residents of the reserve are glossed over⁵². For all the time the organisation has spent "on the ground" talking with the CKGR residents, it has no opinions of how San / Basarwa should pursue development or what their aspirations may be for the future. From SI's perspective, the case is resolved once the Botswana government has restored the Bushmen's land rights and allowed them to continue living as hunter-gatherers.

⁵² One exception to the unified image created by SI's statements is Chief Beslag, who has travelled with President Mogae to testify that his people are happy to resettle outside of the CKGR. According to Survival, which refers to him as the "so-called Chief of New !Xade" (resettlement), Beslag is salaried by the government and many CKGR residents do not feel he speaks for them (www.survival-international.org).



Picture 5.2: “Stone Age Creatures?” (Newspaper reference missing.) The text reads: “Botswana’s president thinks the Gana and Gwi Bushmen belong in the ‘stone age’. Maybe that’s why he’s driving them out of the central Kalahari – their home for 20,000 years – and dumping them in resettlement camps. Or maybe he has his eyes on the diamond deposits beneath their land. The Bushmen just want to live on their land in peace. The president has other ideas: he’s cutting off their water to drive the last Bushmen out. [...]” Source: www.survival-international.org



Picture 5.3: The “Botswana Diamonds: Bushman Despair” advertisement appeared in three Canadian newspapers between March and June 2002. The text reads: “The Gana and Gwi ‘Bushmen’ are being brutally evicted from their ancestral land in Botswana. The authorities have cut off their water, forbidden them to hunt or gather food, and forced them into resettlement camps where despair reigns. The government says this is to ‘develop’ them – others think it’s to make way for diamond mines. You can help save the Gana and Gwi from destruction. Find out more. Support the campaign. Send a donation to ‘Survival – Bushman campaign’.” Source: www.survival-international.org.

The Negotiating Team’s Strategy and Interpretative Frame

A Mediator

In NT’s view the relocation is a well-intended but misguided government policy, because it bases itself on an assimilationist, top-down view of development and

modernisation. NT therefore sees its task as convincing the government to take a different approach to development. Its involvement in the CKGR case includes negotiations with government to implement the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) policy inside the reserve, hosting a discussion seminar, issuing press statements, assisting with funding and logistics to take in water and provisions to those remaining in the reserve and taking government to court to contest the legality of the service cut and the relocation. NT employs elements from different discourses in its interpretative frame: indigenous and minority rights, international and local perspectives on governance and citizenship, rights-based development and community-based environmental conservation.

Due to the negative publicity surrounding Survival International's campaign, it has been important for NT to distance itself from Survival. NT emphasises that its mandate arises from the local anchoring and cultural understanding of the member NGOs and CKGR resident representatives (as opposed to the perspective of an international organisation). By "broad" cultural context (quote below) is meant that they are familiar with dominant Tswana *and* San / Basarwa culture, which puts them in a favourable position to analyse and intervene in the conflict to produce a *local* solution.

NT considers that negotiations are most effectively conducted between government and citizens since they will be founded on the principles of a shared political culture. This refers to the Tswana tradition of negotiating disputes in the *kgotla*, and the tradition of consensus decision-making characteristic of non-hierarchical San / Basarwa communities.

DITSHWANELO is committed to finding a local solution to the situation of the Basarwa of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). The strategy and methods which Survival International uses are not supported by DITSHWANELO. As a locally based NGO, we strive to work within the broad cultural context of Botswana. Past negotiations conducted by the CKGR Negotiating Team demonstrate the potential strengths of discussion and cooperation between the citizens and the Government of Botswana. DITSHWANELO continues to urge the Government of Botswana to meet representatives of the Negotiating Team in order to reach a sustainable resolution to the current situation. (Negotiating Team: Press Statement on Survival International, Ditshwanelo 08.11.02)

Saying “sustainable resolution” as opposed to just “resolution” is also a reference to Survival, as it is felt that the organisation merely criticises without any attempt at being constructive. In NT’s view it is naïve of Survival to think that the case is resolved if the San / Basarwa were allowed to return to the CKGR and to claim they have no opinion of *what* may constitute development for indigenous communities. Development is a long term process requiring co-operation and dialogue between communities and government. There must be plans and policies put in place which offer communities a livelihood and realistic opportunities for development (Director of Ditshwanelo Alice Mogwe pers. comm. 2002).

According to NT, Survival International is a campaigning organisation that achieves results by framing conflicts in simplistic, tabloid terms. The diamond theme is seductive and easily sold, with its oversimplified opposition between the powerful and the powerless. Survival does not need to be concerned with the long term issue of community development, or the nitty-gritty day-to-day encounters with CKGR residents who have travelled to Gaborone to enquire about the status of the case against government and ask for assistance to take water and provisions back to the reserve, or dealings with politicians, public and the NGO community locally. When relations go sour, it is the Negotiating Team (especially Ditshwanelo) that has to deal with the consequences (Director of Ditshwanelo Alice Mogwe pers. comm. 2002, Diana Vinding, IWGIA, pers.comm. 2004).

To the extent that not all NT’s actions could be characterised by co-operation and negotiation with government –such as the court case- this is the fault of Survival International whose campaign deteriorated the climate for dialogue and set the NT back in their efforts:

Since the confrontational intervention of Survival International in 2001, the negotiation process between the CKGR Negotiating Team and the Government of Botswana has effectively stalled. This preceded the cessation of basic and essential services by the Government of Botswana to residents of the CKGR in January 2002. Consequently, the Negotiating Team was forced to take the matter to court for the resumption of basic and essential services to the residents of the CKGR. (Negotiating Team: Press Statement on Survival International, Ditshwanelo 08.11.02)

Questioning Development

We realise [...] that development cannot be introduced within the CKGR because the development model which is utilised expects development to be manifested in the form of schools, clinics, roads, etc. There is very little focus on the empowerment of a community in terms of decreasing their dependence upon the state. (Director of Ditshwanelo Alice Mogwe speaking at CKGR seminar March 2002, Ditshwanelo 2002a)

Ditshwanelo, on behalf of NT, has made use of international and regional human rights instruments to analyse and create international awareness about the relocation conflict and the situation of the San / Basarwa more generally. Ditshwanelo submitted a shadow report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD) in 2000², read a statement during the 31st session of the African Commission about the CKGR issue and provided input to the African Commission's working paper on indigenous peoples (discussed above).

Ditshwanelo has also actively participated in the domestic minority rights debate, for example by hosting a discussion seminar about "Ethnicity and Tribalism in Botswana" (referred to in chapter 4) and a capacity-building workshop for ethnic and indigenous minorities together with Minority Rights Group International.

However, in the Botswana public sphere the San / Basarwa are not referred to as an indigenous people by the Negotiating Team. This must be seen as a conscious choice to avoid the contentious nature of minority rights and what is still a predominantly negative perception of the indigenous concept.

NT (in particular Ditshwanelo) has instead encouraged a focus on *rights-based development*⁵³ in statements concerning the Remote Area Development Programme generally and the relocation specifically:

DITSHWANELO believes that for development to be effective, it must be people-centred. This entails locating people at the centre of processes which

⁵³ Where many states (perhaps particularly in Africa) have seen authoritarianism as necessary for effective policy implementation and human rights as a luxury to be dealt with after achieving a certain level of development, the rights-based approach sees good governance and respect for human rights as a *precondition* for development to take place. Central ideas are communities' self-determination and the promotion of local knowledge in the development process (Ahluwalia 2001, Mohan and Holland 2001).

recognise civil, political, economic, social and cultural aspects of their lives. We continue to call for a rights-based development model to be adopted. This is an alternative to the current development approach used by the Government. Development should be more than the provision of roads, clinics and schools. It should be based on the recognition that the right to development is “*an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realised.*” (Ditshwanelo: Press Statement on Remote Area Development Programme, 23.05.03, emphasis in original).

In the press statement Ditshwanelo quotes Article 1 of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1986 and thus a well established document) *and* refers to the Vision 2016 document’s recent inclusion of the tenet of *botho* as a “national principle” (together with ‘democracy, development, self-reliance, and unity’)⁵⁴. This is intended to show how global ideas can resonate with traditional African values. *Botho* entails reciprocity of rights and obligations between individual and community; the respect for the individual’s uniqueness and worth should be balanced with the individual’s acknowledgement of his or her role in the community (Ditshwanelo, *ibid*). When people are not consulted or invited to participate in development this conflicts with *botho* as well as international principles for good governance.

A crucial effort at framing the relocation conflict as a question of *development* and not primarily indigenous rights was Ditshwanelo’s CKGR Seminar held in March 2002, just after the services had been cut in the reserve. During the seminar, San / Basarwa spokespersons presented their perspective on the case, and NT’s ecological consultant presented a paper about sustainable use of resources and community development in the CKGR, and how this agreed with national policies and programmes for conservation and development, primarily in the form of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). Botswana’s prevailing development model was criticised by several seminar participants for being mechanical and top-down, concerned only with economic growth and social infrastructure but devoid of sensitivity to people’s choices and preferences (Ditshwanelo 2002a).

⁵⁴ Minister of Finance and Development Planning Gaolathe, NDP 9 (National Development Plan no. 9) presentation speech to Parliament, 21.11.02.

CBNRM and Rights-Based Development

Where the government sees an irreconcilable conflict of interest - “incompatibility”- between continued residence, and wildlife conservation and tourism development in the CKGR, the NT has tried to show that people and wildlife are not mutually exclusive in a game reserve. It has engaged the DWNP in negotiations to suggest alterations to the Management Plan for Central Kalahari and Khutse Game Reserves that are more in tune with the rights-based approach to development.

Between 1999 and 2001, FPK mapped traditional territories of the communities living in the CKGR using GPS, satellite imagery and GIS. Boundaries between traditional territories and important places within the territories were recorded. Localities included different water resources, wet and dry season hunting and gathering areas, burial sites, landscape features, and wet and dry season camps (Albertson 2002, Albertson and van der Post 2002).

The mapped traditional territories were in turn used to demarcate Community Use Zones (CUZs; the management units of CBNRM), in an attempt to integrate San / Basarwa’s environmental knowledge and territoriality into the Management Plan. The revised plan (the “3rd Draft Management Plan”) envisaged limitations on infrastructural development and extent of livestock keeping and controls with the hunting and farming techniques used. Income-generating activities would include cultural tourism, and it was suggested that community education be provided in the children’s mother tongue at pre-school and primary levels (Albertson 2002, Ditshwanelo 2002c).

The negotiations between DWNP and NT allowed for San / Basarwa representatives to have a say in the formulation of a policy document. NT has presented the negotiations as being in tune with Botswana’s tradition for citizen –government interaction in the political process. From the perspective of the international human rights discourse it is also in accordance with the rights-based approach to development, which in the case of indigenous peoples would involve adhering to ILO Convention 169’s principles of consultation, participation and control over the development process as a collective right (Salomon 2003).

Given its emphasis on negotiation and collaboration the Negotiating Team has made it clear that taking government to court is the very last resort. The adversarial

system of Roman-Dutch law produces a winner and a loser, in contradistinction to Botswana's system of customary law, where deliberations in the *kgotla* were aimed at arriving at a solution satisfactory to both parties. Instead of approaching with goodwill, each party is now attempting to bring discredit to the other in what is likely to be a drawn-out legal battle (Mogwe 2004).

Concluding Remarks

Survival sees the solution to the relocation conflict as a matter of convincing the government to recognise the right to ownership of land and resources of an indigenous people in accordance with ILO Convention no. 169. According to Suzman⁵⁵, SI's Director Stephen Corry rejected the 3rd Draft Management Plan for the CKGR because it only implied usufruct and residential rights for the CKGR communities, not ownership as stipulated by international law.

Between the Botswana government and Survival International the issue of development takes a simplistic, polarised form. With SI's emphasis on cultural survival, questions of future livelihoods and development become marginal next to the issue of promoting land ownership and continued rights to hunting and gathering for the Bushmen. To the government (and many Batswana), SI's opposition to the relocation coupled with its esteem for hunting and gathering as an adaptation is seen to represent *anti-development* and a romantic desire to restore a 'backward lifestyle'.

Taylor (2000:271) says from his study that "[San / Basarwa's] narratives of development allude to 'progress' and 'becoming modern', [but as a] complex compound of aspects of dominant definitions of development and priorities drawn from their own experiences". Construing development as either a *top – down* or *bottom –up* process overshadows the question of what the CKGR residents' desires for, and possible contribution to, development may be. Instead development is depoliticised, detached from questions of political participation and representation (Ahluwalia 2001, Mohan and Holland 2001).

⁵⁵ South African Mail & Guardian 13.12.02.

Survival's interpretative frame articulates the relocation as a typical conflict between a first people and its government, as a conflict of cultural survival versus economic growth. The organisation's frame draws on images of 'Bushman-ness' and a simplified opposition between oppressor and victim that resonates with a Western constituency's expectation of African governments as authoritarian, violent and in contempt of international human rights principles.

As a result, the real subject of Survival's campaign is the Western observer and activist, while the CKGR residents (as *Bushmen*) are stripped of agency. This view is supported by Mphinyane (2002), who says that the gendered language of Survival International's narrative presents the San / Mosarwa subject as effeminate and passive victim, the government as brutal villain, and Survival itself as the valiant rescuer.

Where SI is dogmatic in its application of international indigenous rights principles, NT's approach can be characterised as more pragmatic, adapting the interpretative frame to its understanding of the regional and domestic political context. In Ditshwanelo's (possibly NT's main framing agent) opinion there is little scope for debating indigeness explicitly, but given the government's introduction of CBNRM the climate is likely to be more conducive to interrogating the meaning and process of development while remaining sensitive to local conceptions of democracy and state-citizen interaction. The rest of Botswana's NGO community has shown itself rather unsympathetic to the indigenous cause (Ditshwanelo Director Alice Mogwe, pers.comm. 2002), but the CKGR seminar revealed considerable support for NT's perspectives on development.

It is doubtful that CBNRM provides the means for promoting the rights of the San / Basarwa as a 'First People' as it stands (in terms of respecting local leadership and a community's priorities in resource use), given its propensity for reproducing the typical paternalistic attitudes towards San / Basarwa, and its capitalisation of the environment. However, an important point about NT's strategy raised by Taylor (pers. comm. 2004), is that although CBNRM may not provide the *ideal* solution, what it does is to provide crucial rights to land and hence future options for the communities in question. As Taylor (2000) showed for his study areas, CBNRM gives access to land and may produce an

enabling environment for mobilising for *control* over land, which is essential for indigenous peoples' self-determination and continued existence as communities (Daes 2001). Taylor also stresses the potential of small-scale cultural tourism projects based on local skills and knowledge (for example, involving such activities as taking small groups of tourists on game tracking walks, or showing techniques for gathering and utilising plants) for increasing "visibility and the expression and reformulation of San / Basarwa history and identity in public arenas" (2000:281).

The negotiation process with DWNP enabled the CKGR residents, through the facilitating effort of NT, to engage with one of the planning institutions of the state, as well as to contribute to setting the priorities for development. The negotiations were not just framed by NT as adherence to 'universal' principles, but as conforming to Botswana and African democratic values. By uniting elements from global and national discourses of indigenusness and citizenship, NT takes on the role of mediator, aligning the interests of San / Basarwa to those of the government (Mohan and Holland 2001).

6. RELOCATED IDENTITIES

The quotes and viewpoints in this chapter bring together the perspectives and narratives of the stakeholders in the conflict. With the discursive background of citizenship and indigeneness provided in the previous two chapters, I distinguish between three subject positions on the basis of the kind of identity and possibility for agency they present the CKGR residents with.

The Fellow Citizens

Relocation as Social Engineering

Statements by politicians and members of the public in connection with the relocation reinforce a universalising, homogenising and modernist development discourse, where citizens are created in the Tswana image:

Government stand is clear. It wants to develop and empower Basarwa so they can live a normal life like every Motswana rather than continue to subsist as hunters/gatherers in the reserve. To achieve this, government [has] relocated willing Basarwa to settlements outside the reserve and given them cattle and goats to rear. Others are being trained in sewing and knitting, brick moulding, carpentry, as well as tannery and leather works. In addition, government has provided them with services and amenities such as schools, health posts and potable water for both human and livestock consumption. (Daily News 23.09.02)

The CKGR relocation is justified on the basis of the perceived redundancy of the San / Basarwa residents' lifestyle and skills as hunter-gatherers. Firstly, hunting and gathering on its own is an "unsustainable" activity in modern-day Botswana ("unsustainable" in this context referring to what is socially undesirable, not ecologically unfeasible). Secondly, the mixed livelihood strategy (combining hunting and gathering

with livestock and small-scale agriculture) employed by the CKGR residents is deemed “incompatible” with wildlife conservation and tourism development⁵⁶.

In the eyes of the government ‘development’ and ‘empowerment’ of the San / Basarwa implies moving to places that are appropriate for leading a normalised existence which mimics Tswana rural lifestyle, as sedentary pastoralists and farmers. The RADP allocates residential and arable land to each relocated family, compensates for abandoned property in the form of cash, and distributes goats and cattle. Former CKGR residents are –in the passive- “assisted”, “given”, “provided” and “being trained” in a benevolent effort at top-down social engineering. As was said in chapter 4, ‘empowerment’ in this context signifies becoming a proper *person* in the eyes of majority society, or with a much used phrase: becoming “integrated into mainstream of society” (e.g. Daily News 15.10.02 and 29.10.02).

Although in accord with the relocation, opposition leader Kenneth Koma has criticised the RADP compensation package for not being sufficiently progressive. His critique presents development as progressive stages of modernisation, where the government should lead the San / Basarwa past the hunting-gathering stage to the agrarian and even industrial and information society:

Relocated Basarwa from the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve should be taught industrial skills and information-age skills in addition to basic education. Kenneth Koma, leader of the opposition, said when debating President Festus Mogae's state-of-the-nation address in Parliament on Wednesday that transforming Basarwa from a hunter-gatherer society to an agricultural one is not an easy task. Koma said it would be more sustainable to empower Basarwa to participate in an industrial economy through vocational training rather than just to rear livestock. Alongside vocational training, Basarwa should also be assisted to acquire computer skills. (Daily News 15.11.02)

Following allegations in the press that compensation was not paid out promptly and correctly, government invited journalists to the relocation settlements outside the CKGR, where they could observe the Assistant Minister of Local Government and the Director of RADP hand out cattle, cash and bank account numbers (with a request that the beneficiaries deposit the cash rather than spend it all at once) to recently relocated

⁵⁶ I do not provide specific references here, as “unsustainable” and “incompatible” are widely used adjectives to describe hunting and gathering in the context of the relocation.

San / Basarwa families (Mmegi Monitor 21.05.02). The transition from bush to civilised village simultaneously represents the (for some, exhilarating) entry into the life worlds of cattle and cash (Taylor 2000):

All his life, Tlhogoyaphuduhudu, a former resident of Metsi-a-Manong settlement inside the CKGR has only known poverty. But now if all goes well the father of one has parted company with pauperism forever. "I am going to be rich now. The only problem is that I do not have a kraal. I do not know where I will put the cows tonight. I did not believe them when they said they were going to give us cattle. I thought they were joking. Now, I am afraid they may get lost", he said his head spinning as he escorted the five heifers out of the Veterinary Department kraal. (Mmegi Monitor 21.05.02)

Journalists who accompanied [Director of RADP] Major General Pheto, on a tour of the settlements where Basarwa relocated from CKGR had been settled, had a taste of the palpable excitement that permeated the sandy village last Saturday. Suddenly flush with money, customers kept Spaza shop assistants and shebeen queens on their toes. [...] As we were talking an old woman came limping and wading through the sand, and without hesitation took out a P 100 note to buy sukiri (sugar). "It has never been like this before. The problem is that I am starting to have a problem with change. I had to turn some of these people back because I did not have sufficient change", said the perfectly manicured Gubuwe, who spotted a braided ponytail. In the nearby shebeen, music was blaring from a hi-fi stereo, and a man and a woman holding beer cans were jiving face to face. It was said the man bought a whole case of Carling Black Label beer. "It was not him alone. Yesterday when the beer arrived, people just came and grabbed cases of beer. There is nothing left now. Most of the people who are here are drinking khadi (a local brew)", said the spectator. (Mmegi Monitor 21.05.02)

A success story printed in the Daily News is about a resident of New !Xade resettlement who left the CKGR during the 1997/98 relocation and has had some years to accumulate his wealth. Some have expressed concern that livestock is given to "people who know nothing about pastoral farming"⁵⁷ and will slaughter or sell off instead of saving to build a herd (another stereotypical assumption about the San / Basarwa is their disposition to live in the present and not have the capacity for forward planning). However, this man defies ethnic stereotypes and manages his cattle like any good Motswana. He even wants modern housing:

⁵⁷ Leader of the opposition Kenneth Koma quoted in The Midweek Sun, 20.11.02.

Custom Gabogalalwe, a resident of New Xade, did not have cattle at Old Xade. Back in the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve (CKGR), Gabogalalwe kept goats, horses and donkeys. After relocation to New Xade, more than 70 km away from the old settlement and outside the game reserve, Gabogalalwe received five head of cattle from the Economic Promotion Fund, a component of the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP). [...] He is among successful new farmers in the settlement who now owns between 20 and 30 heads of cattle. His cattle has increased more than those of other beneficiaries because he neither sells nor slaughters frequently. His ambition is to have at least 70 animals. [...] The aspiring cattle baron has sold only three oxen to entrepreneurs from Ghanzi at P1000 each. He saved the money and his ambition is to build a modern house. (Daily News 23.03.04)

Daily News has also reported from *kgotla* meetings between local and national politicians and residents of the relocation settlements, where issues pertaining to relocation, compensation and life in the resettlements are discussed. The meetings present San / Basarwa with the opportunity to articulate their experiences and demands in their new circumstances of life, in a forum they were previously barred from. The interaction is highly structured by the government-patron versus citizen-client relationship. Politicians “advise”, “promise”, “urge” and “assure”, while the constituents praise or bring forward grievances about the quality and extent of public services and make requests for government to provide larger food rations, new boreholes for improved water supply, training in “cattle ranching and farming techniques”, fencing to protect livestock and crops from wildlife. The government is even urged to “control the movement of wild animals”. The independence and adaptability to the hazards and uncertainties of the environment which is associated with hunter-gatherer communities is here replaced by a notion of the government as a providing, caring guardian and regulator of nature:

[A Kaudwane resident] noted during a *kgotla* meeting addressed by a four-member ministerial team led by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lt. Gen. Mompoti Merafhe that most Basarwa appreciate efforts by government to empower them. Other residents concurred with the sentiments, adding that life was much better at Kaudwane compared to the reserve where there was no water. However, they complained that lions were killing cattle distributed to them by government under the Rural Area Development Programme (RADP). They also complained they could not plough because predators killed their donkeys. They appealed to wildlife officers to control the movement of wild animals, as well as compensate them quickly and adequately for livestock killed by predators. Meanwhile, headman of Kaudwane Maiteela Segwaba requested ministers to visit his settlement regularly so that people who have been resettled there do not feel

abandoned. Also, he requested for another borehole to water livestock. (Daily News 12.09.02)

Mbokololo [a resident of Kaudwane resettlement] said their local primary school and the clinic were well managed and praised government for the facilities. Other residents blamed the government for not making arrangements to teach them cattle ranching and other farming techniques. They said their agriculture would never improve if agricultural demonstrators were not sent to their settlement. Residents appealed to government to consider providing them with farming equipment as their donkeys, which they used for ploughing, have been eaten by lions and other predators. (Daily News 12.09.02)

Citizenship and State Territoriality

Speaking at a European Parliament roundtable, the president told members of parliament that “the attitude [“British organisations”, i.e. Survival, has] taken is unhelpful.” He said it gives the impression that Basarwa are found in the CKGR where as only about one per cent was found there before they were relocated. Asked by one member why it was so ‘urgent’ to have them leave their ‘country’ and “give you a bad name you don’t deserve” the president reminded her that the whole of Botswana is their country. (President Mogae visits Brussels to promote the “Diamonds for Development” campaign and the Kimberley Process, Daily News 16.10.02)

In this statement, President Mogae subverts the territoriality and ethnicity of San / Basarwa by articulating them as *citizens* who belong to Botswana’s national territory, not just the Kalahari Desert. Even if they move out of the CKGR they are still at home. In fact, the great majority of San / Basarwa live elsewhere than the CKGR.

The relocation policy can be seen as a strategy of the government to recover a territory which should belong to the nation. San / Basarwa’s homeland is the territory of Botswana, and in the effort to make the tourism sector an alternative ‘engine of growth’ to diamond mining, the CKGR is incorporated into the national economy and landscape as the desert of the catch phrase “Desert and Delta⁵⁸”. Spaces for development and spaces for conservation are neatly dichotomised according to the Tswana model of socio-spatial order and functionality.

From September 2002 there were reports of San / Basarwa moving back into the reserve from the resettlements, having spent the compensation money to purchase horses

⁵⁸ -The “Delta” referring to the Okavango Delta in northern Botswana, a major destination for (mostly international luxury) wildlife tourism.

and vehicles. To halt the out-migration, roadblocks were set up by the police. Former CKGR residents were detained without charge or with minor charges such as driving with a broken taillight, no seat belt, or expired registration. Vehicles were confiscated and people trucked back to the relocation settlements outside the reserve. The RADP Co-ordinator denied that the roadblocks had been mounted following an order from government centrally; instead government expressed “disappointment” at the breach of trust the misuse of compensation money represented (Chicago Tribune 15.10.02, Daily News 16.10.02, South African Mail and Guardian 11.10.02, The Midweek Sun 13.11.02).

From the perspective of the government, returning to the CKGR after first relocating represents an opportunistic abuse of citizenship. It is a boundary transgression which undermines Botswana’s citizenship, and hence threatens the authority of the state. The response, policing the CKGR border and intercepting returning residents, serves to re-establish the boundary between conservation and development, between ‘hunter-gatherer-ness’ and citizenship (Sullivan and Homewood 2003).



Picture 6.1 . Source: Mmegi 15.11.02

San / Basarwa's opportunistic breach of citizenship is also portrayed in the cartoon commentary from Mmegi newspaper (picture 6.1). It shows a CKGR resident who has returned to the reserve after first being relocated, confronted by a government representative. The San / Mosarwa man is determined to continue living in a straw hut inside the CKGR, but now with the added conveniences of a hi-fi stereo bought for compensation money and government goats grazing in the background.

The image reflects and consolidates the sentiment some people have, namely that the San / Basarwa tend to receive more than their fair share of the development cake, without making the sacrifice other Batswana have made: to move in the common interest of the nation (Taylor 2000, Ruud Jansen pers.comm. 2002).

The following quote reinforces the spatial organisation of development, and it is simultaneously a narrative of the *Tswana* experience of development:

I know Basarwa and the people of my country better than you or the representatives you refer to. I was born at the cattle post, literally in a cow shed like the Biblical Jesus. My mother and father still live there, and I and my brothers and sisters go there at Christmas for family reunion with uncles, aunts, cousins etc. But would I give birth there myself and bring up my children there? There is a borehole for water that belongs to my father. Is the water fit to drink? Would you drink it? There are cattle, goats, donkeys, chickens and dogs, but no school, no health clinic, no sanitary services, no work, no money and no shops. If I had to live with children in England in such conditions a welfare officer would have a court order to remove my children and me. The conditions at my father's cattle post are better than the conditions in the Kalahari that you so eloquently say the Basarwa wish to return to (Open letter to Director of Survival International Stephen Corry, Mmegi 15.11.02).

The traditional rural cattle post remains important to contemporary Tswana identity. To many urban dwellers the cattle post represents continuity with the past and is a place for family reunions and weekend retreats. However, as the young woman points out, it is not a place of opportunities. The cattle post has no future and the 'bush' of the San / Basarwa even less so. The land of the San / Basarwa, the Kalahari, is inappropriate for habitation and development.

Development is still a relatively recent experience to Batswana, in a country that has experienced enormous transformation over the span of only two generations. To people whose parents grew up without access to electricity, running water or education

the suggestion that San / Basarwa prefer to continue a traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle comes across as a ridiculous, romantic fantasy (Jansen, pers. comm. 2002, Taylor, pers. comm. 2005).

Groups such as Survival International have been accused of misunderstanding the Basarwa issue. They are said to be only issuing statements from the comfort of their perfumed offices in London. (Editorial, Mmegi Monitor, 05.02.02)

The sentiment among many Batswana is that it is easy to paint rosy nostalgic pictures of the past when sitting comfortably in an office in London, in a European welfare state. If Survival could understand the realities of life in the thorny, dusty and thirsty Kalahari, they would not in earnest believe that anybody would prefer to live like their ancestors did. The San / Basarwa now have a chance to escape the poverty and move to where the services and comforts of modern life are provided.

The First People

A very different version of life in the resettlement villages than that portrayed in Daily News arises from the statements of the CKGR residents, the anti-relocation movement and other supporters. These stories are about the collective and individual stress of relocation, as it disrupts social relationships, cultural practices and the intimate relationship with the land. However, the stories are also about agency and independence: From an indigenous rights perspective, refusing to leave the CKGR or returning to the CKGR from the resettlements constitutes a performance of self-identification and self-determination.

Rootedness in Place

Land is all important to us. If we lose our land we lose everything. We lose our identity and we lose our life. (Roy Sesana, First People of the Kalahari. "The Bushmen's Last Dance" September 2002. Translated from *G/wi*.)

As the land constitutes the essence of San- / Basarwa-ness, relocating will deprive the CKGR residents of their identity. To the San / Basarwa the land is a factor of existence, providing "religious significance, cultural integrity and social identification"

(Sullivan and Homewood 2003:37). It is not a piece of property that can be sold or compensated for:

The government of Botswana is paying something to the people who are being relocated. However, our question is: How is the amount calculated? How do you put a value on that link with the land? [...] Can it be replaced or compensated? (Ditshwanelo Director Alice Mogwe, CKGR Seminar March 2002. Ditshwanelo 2002a:19)

Aaron Johannes, WIMSA spokesperson, shows the vulnerability of San / Basarwa culture when uprooted. He articulates the crumbling of social fabric taking place in the resettlement villages, as parental guidance and authority lose significance:

My understanding is that, out of observation, our people, particularly those who are staying in the CKGR, seem to be doing well in terms of organising their families, teaching their children good values and teaching their children their culture, which is essential for their lives and for the understanding of themselves as a community. If you take that and compare it with what happens in so-called settlements, there is a lot of lawlessness. This emanates from the problem that, in many cases, the elderly in those settlements take most of their time consuming liquor and as a result they are unable to instil good values in their children. This is a particular worry to us because we do not want to see part of our community living like that, losing their good culture, losing good values that are essential in describing and characterising us as a community that has goals in life to achieve, and a sense of worth. We are also concerned that in these so-called settlements, the young Basarwa children, especially girls, are abused. This is a particular source of concern to us, so much that we think the so-called Tswana groups want to annihilate us⁵⁹ (CKGR Seminar 05.03.02, Ditshwanelo 2002a:14).

Dislocated Knowledges

The following statements present the knowledge of hunter-gatherers as firmly rooted in place, in the specificities and complexities of Kalahari's physical and cultural environment. San / Basarwa's skills and practices are not relocatable; when removed from their context in the CKGR they are either obsolete or they take on a distorted and crippled meaning.

⁵⁹ San / Basarwa women are often considered unmarriageable by Tswana men. Says Motzafi-Haller (1994:547): "Supported by social convention, these men dissociate themselves from any social or material responsibility toward these women and the children they father with them." The lack of a sense of responsibility makes sexual abuse or exploitation of under-age Basarwa girls more acceptable.

According to the Negotiating Team's ecologist, San / Basarwa's knowledge and land use practices, although highly complex and well adapted to the environment of their particular territory, are not transferable to resettlement areas outside the CKGR which tend to be poorer in resources and have higher population concentrations:

Communities have in-depth knowledge of local faunal and floral dynamics, but only within their respective territories. [...] They are unable to make effective use of and wisely manage their natural resources if removed from their traditional territories. (Negotiating Team's ecologist and technical consultant Arthur Albertson (2002:4))

In New Xade the skills of hunting and gathering, which used to provide a good livelihood, are rendered useless. Relocated residents are instead put to work in government work schemes, often performing strenuous and repetitive manual labour:

I used to gather wild berries and delicious fruits from the ground. Here there's nothing to gather and the men can't hunt. We don't have enough to eat. So we have to work hard for very little. All of us want to go home. It's only the government that likes New Xade. (Woman resettled to New Xade, "The Bushmen's Last Dance" September 2002)

For many people there is no alternative way to apply their skills, as there simply are no jobs. The lack of employment opportunities in the resettlements lead to alcohol abuse and depression⁶⁰.

It did not appear to us that the San were thriving in the resettlements. There is a sense of apathy and depression, and the levels of alcoholism are said to be very high. (Carte Blanche reporting from New Xade and Kaudwane, South African M-net 24.02.02)

[T]he people who have moved to the [re]settlements (I have worked in Ghantsi District) seem to have more problems like alcoholism, idling, and boredom. I have worked around the Central Kalahari itself, the people seem to be more healthy, their minds seem to be in a better state than people who have resettled (CKGR seminar participant, Ditshwanelo 2002a:10).

⁶⁰ As described in the section about the Remote Area Development Programme in chapter 4, similar social problems are widespread in RADP settlements throughout Botswana; they are not specific to the relocation settlements outside the CKGR (Saugestad 1998, Suzman 2001a).

In the documentary “The Bushmen’s Last Dance”, an inebriated woman is filmed in front of a shebeen in New !Xade, swaying and singing. Her drunken dance is uprooted and without purpose; the opposite of the traditional trance dance, which has healing powers and connects people to their ancestors and their God:

A drunk person is a dead person. People dance here, but it doesn’t come from the spirit. Each dances for themselves, there is nothing communal in it. They sing songs that mean nothing because they are drunk. Dancing used to have a spiritual meaning for us, it used to link us to the ancestors. (First People of the Kalahari spokesperson Roy Sesana, “The Bushmen’s Last Dance” 2002. Translated from *G/wi*.)

Citizenship and Self-Determination

Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Minister, Mompoti Merafhe added that the government has always subscribed to a policy of voluntary repatriation [relocation from the CKGR]. [...] That policy, [Minister of Trade and Industry] Nkate said, took the form of persuading people. But Okavango MP Joseph Kavindama wanted to know what would happen in a case where people were not persuaded and refused to move. “We would continue persuading them until they are persuaded,” Nkate replied. (The Midweek Sun reporting from Parliament, 20.11.02)

According to the government, CKGR residents were thoroughly consulted in *kgotla* meetings over a period of several years before relocation occurred. In their opinion, the majority of the residents were in favour of the policy. However, the quality and appropriateness of the consultations has been questioned by the Negotiating Team and other commentators. As was said in chapter 4, the *kgotla* is a Tswana institution which traditionally excluded the San / Basarwa, and it has also been criticised for serving more as a forum for dictation from government than for debate and exchange between constituents and politicians. The statement by Minister Nkate is illustrative the know-all attitude of the government in relation to the San / Basarwa. As there is no acceptable alternative to relocation, those who do not comply will simply need continued persuasion (Ahluwalia 2001, The Botswana Gazette (letter to the Editor) 18.12.02, Ditshwanelo 2002c, Solway 2002).

Government has repeatedly asserted that relocation is voluntary and has taken place without any use of force. However, Survival International has recorded statements

about abuse at the hands of DWNP officials, and Ditshwanelo has pointed out that it does not take much “force” to get an intimidated and oppressed group of people to comply (www.survival-international.org, Alice Mogwe pers. comm. 2002) .

CKGR residents’ and San / Basarwa spokespersons’ statements in connection with the relocation testify to a citizenship which does not permit any real possibilities for participation and self-determination, but instead dictates where they should live and what constitutes ‘development’.

The Constitution of Botswana permits us to stay wherever we want. If the Government cannot provide for us where we are, then it would be an irresponsible Government. (Leader of First People of the Kalahari Roy Sesana, Mmegi 08.02.02)

[W]e think we are not full citizens, in the sense that when it comes to development the state imposes on us how we should be developed. They don’t ask us what we want, or how they can develop us. Every time we are being told and not given any options. We have very little input in the process and this is the major concern because then we are asking ourselves whether we are real citizens. (Aaron Johannes, WIMSA, speaking at CKGR Seminar 05.03.02, Ditshwanelo 2002a:3)

As San / Basarwa citizenship is contingent upon their agreeing to relocate, it follows that if they remain in the CKGR, they are not Batswana:

We are now surviving for ourselves; we are not under the government of Botswana. [...]The government of Botswana if he don’t want Mosarwa in Botswana why doesn’t he tell us to move to other countries. We ask you to tell other countries about this situation that there is no freedom in this country. Tell other countries so that if we die they will know that there were people in this area. They said we will be Batswana if we can move. If we don’t want to move we are not Batswana. (Quoted from letter by a resident of Gugama settlement in the CKGR. The letter was handed to an Italian tourist, who later passed it on to Survival International. October 2002)

As there is no longer a government for the CKGR residents, they must “survive for themselves” and handle their own service provision. On several occasions since government services were terminated, residents have brought in water and food rations on their own accord, at times with financial and logistical assistance of the Negotiating Team organisations (Ditshwanelo 2002c, Alice Mogwe pers. comm. 2002).

While some statements create the impression of a citizenship that is lost because the government has abandoned the San / Basarwa, the next statement suggests that government presence has not been sufficiently pervasive or lasting to take away San / Basarwa's independence and identity. Staying on their land is more important than to be able to have access to running water and other government services:

We grew up eating various fruits of the wild. This water engine only came here in the 1980's. So we will just survive by our own means. We cannot leave our ancestors' graves. (Resident speaking at *kgotla* meeting in Mothomelo settlement, CKGR. Mmegi 08.02.02)

The Bushmen

The "Bushman" position is created by the joint representations of Survival International and the Botswana government and public.

In the previous chapter I showed how Survival implicates "Bushmen" as passive victims of the state's policies for capitalist modernisation. In the representations of politicians and members of the public, the "Bushmen" have a different role, as symbols of African resistance to the European objectifying gaze, and the struggle for autonomous subjectivity and nationhood.

Resisting the Western Gaze

Having only recently liberated ourselves from colonialism and apartheid, it should not come as a surprise that we wish to sing our own songs, while occasionally voicing fears about the emergence of a new, global, apartheid between the haves and have not regions of the world (President Mogae's opening address, 5th CIVICUS World Assembly in Gaborone, 21.03.04).

According to President Mogae, the continued circulation of ideas and images of 'Bushman-ness' is enabled by the uneven nature of globalisation, where Africa and Africans perpetually are at the mercy of Western representations. He is concerned over what he sees as a "growing imbalance in global communications" between North and South. As the North (or West) continues to hold the power of representation, the notion of the developing world as being incapable of democratic governance without outside interference is perpetuated.

Given our recent past, it is also why we remain sceptical of those who insist, with something approaching missionary fervour, that we must convert to their imported dogma of what is, and is not appropriate behaviour. While we welcome a world in which information technology allows for global dialogue, we fear the prospect of imposed conformity in the context of the growing imbalance in global communications, which is reflective of the existence of wider inequalities. [...] Worse is the phenomenon of a few NGOs, whose agendas pose an actual threat to the livelihoods of those in the developing world whose needs they claim to represent. In this, some encroach on the very wellbeing, as well as independent identity, of the developing world through rigid and self-serving interpretations of what supposedly constitutes international norms. In the process they can interfere in the domestic responsibility of any sovereign, democratic government to respond to the internal needs and demands of its own people. (President Mogae's opening address, 5th CIVICUS World Assembly in Gaborone, 21.03.04)

Mogae's words about the threat posed by "a few NGOs" and are clearly addressed to Survival International. The "imported dogma" of "appropriate behaviour" and "self-serving interpretations of what supposedly constitutes international norms" we can assume refer to Survival's use of indigenous rights principles to contest the CKGR relocation.

According to Mogae, Botswana's democracy is embedded in an indigenous political culture with principles of accountability - such as "*Kgosi ke kgosi ka batho*" (a king or chief is a leader by the people), consultation and tolerance through the *kgotla* institution and respect for human dignity through *botho* (also discussed in chapter 2 and chapter 5). These principles existed long before the introduction of a Western-style liberal democratic constitution. Botswana's democracy and style of governance is founded on a political culture with its own specificity (containing principles that cannot be "precisely translated") and it should be appraised as such, not merely a distorted and deficient replication of a Western 'universal' ideal:

Here in Botswana we have long defined our common humanity through a set of values we call "botho". Some in this room are familiar with equivalent terms such as "ubuntu", which are rooted in a common African understanding that the wellbeing of society as a whole rests on a foundation of collective respect for the dignity of each individual. I do not doubt that the qualities of botho/ubuntu can be found beyond the shores of this continent. But, I also suspect that our African terms cannot be precisely translated. Such are the paradoxes of unity in diversity. (President Mogae's opening address, 5th CIVICUS World Assembly in Gaborone, 21.03.04)

'Perverse' Ethnocentrism

To many Batswana, the Western gaze has a double meaning and a double standard; it judges about Botswana's governance while simultaneously fabricating racist, neo-colonialist images of Africa and Africans. Just as in the past, the Bushmen come to serve as show pieces for a Western audience. Now the museum is the CKGR itself, where the San / Basarwa can be observed in their pre-modern state:

They romanticize this person called Mosarwa, like it is some ancient something that we all ought to go and see because it conjures images about the origins of man. –No. Sorry. (Minister of Local Government Margaret Nasha, "The Bushmen's Last Dance" September 2002)

In the relocation conflict it is Survival International that embodies the gaze, as the organisation disseminates images and stories about Bushmen, civilisation and human rights to a Western audience. The power of Survival International is to observe, photograph, and publish its version of the Bushmen's stories in a way that will perpetuate the myth of Africa as "the dark continent", of pre-modernity, savage sexuality, and underdevelopment:

[Foreign Minister Mompoti Merafhe accused] Survival International of using the Basarwa issue to boost its international profile. "Although Survival International has been in existence for three decades, it remained fairly unknown and ineffective until it started pursuing the issue of Basarwa. In rallying around the Basarwa issue, it found a topic which is not only a money spinner, but also appeals to those who are imbued with romantic perceptions of Africa as a dark continent which is inhabited by savages who run around half naked chasing wild animals," Merafhe said (The Midweek Sun reporting from Parliament, 27.11.02).

Spies and Traitors

Government has been criticised for being lenient to members of the UK based non governmental organisation, Survival International who are influencing Basarwa to move back into the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve. [A resident of one of the resettlements] lashed out at people who come into the country under the guise of tourists, while their motive is to hinder and disrupt the country's socio-economic situation is fuelled by some unpatriotic Batswana for a reward," he said. "These are people who are leading luxurious lives." (Daily News 08.11.02)

A resident of Kaudwane settlement in the Kweneng West, Kelereng Ramathaatoga said on Monday that members of SI roam about their settlement freely without even the courtesy to report themselves to the elders. (Daily News 12.09.02)

There has been considerable disenchantment with the fact that SI staff has entered Botswana on tourist visas when conducting field trips, instead of taking the official route and being open about the purpose of their visit. SI's employees are presented as "phoney tourists", akin to spies, who constitute a threat to national security. At a press conference about the relocation exercise, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mompoti Merafhe said about SI's Director Stephen Corry that "He is our enemy, and an enemy of Botswana" (quoted in The Midweek Sun, 20.02.02).

Meanwhile, San / Basarwa representatives who speak out against the relocation are presented as "unpatriotic Batswana" (quote above). The most prominent traitor is FPK spokesperson Roy Sesana, who has sold his country out by travelling abroad on Survival's expense to represent the San / Basarwa's case, by driving a car and owning a house in Ghanzi instead of staying in a straw hut in the CKGR (The Midweek Sun, 20.02.02). Sesana's treachery consists in turning himself into a Bushman, an object for Survival International to display to an international audience:

[Mayor of Francistown Peter Ngoma] says "Survival International is bent on exploit[ing] the Basarwa community and keeping them as show pieces like their fellow Europeans did with El-Negro." El Negro is the stuffed mummy of a Motswana whose remains were taken to Europe by grave robbers and kept in a museum as an amusement piece. He was returned to Botswana following pressure from African leaders and diaspora blacks. Ngoma warned Sesana that while he was being used by the west to trap his people in the stone age for the amusement of Europeans with perverted tastes, he would not be surprised if Sesana ends up as a mummy window dressing museums in Europe just like El Negro. (The Botswana Guardian reporting from BDP political rally, 29.11.02)

The author of the guest column extract below (and many others with her) asks why it is only the relocation of Basarwa communities that captures the interest of Survival, while many other communities in Botswana have been moved in the name of national development. Her answer is the special place of Bushmen in the Western consciousness, a "nostalgic grip" that must now give way to realism and future-orientation.

In Botswana and even in England, people have been relocated to pave way for development. The mines that contribute towards Botswana's development are erected in places where people used to and still have their cultural roots. Why does it become an issue for SI only when it involves a portion of Basarwa communities? This can be interpreted as a nostalgic grip towards Basarwa, who earlier European travellers described as "one of the most mysterious peoples of the world. To find a comparable form of existence you would have to go back to the Stone Age". (Balsan 1954:83). This perception influence and guide organisations such as SI, no matter how much they would like to deny it. (Mmegi 29.11.02)

Concluding Remarks: Relocated Identities

The Fellow Citizens

The "fellow citizens" have complied with the government and left the CKGR. They have internalised dominant constructions of hunting and gathering as obsolete and unsustainable, and request further training, assistance and protection from the government to become productive agro-pastoralists. In the language of development and empowerment, the resettlements become places of bustling activity, of learning, productivity, opportunities and future-orientation, under the protection and guidance of the government.

The "fellow citizens" fit comfortably with the type of society and nation that the dominant majority are envisaging. This is a society that pursues development and modernisation as culturally neutral and homogenising processes, ignoring any interests that may arise from alternative ethnic and territorial affiliation. Tswana culture and the values of the nation-building developmental state are taken to represent everybody's wishes and aspirations.

The compliance of the "fellow citizens" is rewarded with compensation, access to social infrastructure and the opportunity to negotiate their claims as citizens directly with politicians in the public assembly of the *kgotla*. By placing demands on politicians they can influence the course of 'development' in the settlements -at least in practical implementation. This may be seen as a mark of empowerment and integration for a group who historically, and still in most instances, is excluded from political institutions. However, it is to be expected that the visits of keen politicians and senior bureaucrats will diminish with time, and it is questionable whether the situation in the resettlements

outside the CKGR will be any different from the other, over 60 in number, RADP settlements.

The First People

Those who have chosen to remain in the CKGR without service provision are questioning a citizenship that conflicts profoundly with their identity as hunter-gatherers. To the “first people”, the connection with the ancestral land is overriding any allegiance to the nation state and territory, and they question ‘development’ when it speaks for and not with the people concerned.

Remaining in the CKGR as a “first people” may be considered as a performance of indigenusness. Drawing on the meta-narrative of indigenusness and the channels of communication opened by the indigenous movement, the “first people” articulate their identity as rootedness in the ancestral land, and the re-settlements as places of social, cultural and moral disintegration.

But to what extent does the “first people” position entail participation and self-representation as San / Basarwa, and to what extent is it a performance directed by the indigenous movement, tailored to conform to international (Western) expectations?

In chapter 5 I used Taylor (2000) to show that San / Basarwa continue to identify collectively as hunter-gatherers, despite the fact that hunting is severely restricted and gathering also has a much diminished role in sustaining households. The hunting and gathering past is a crucial aspect of a *narrative* of San- / Basarwa-ness, even though this is not a lived, embodied experience.

As I said in chapter 2, the indigenous rights discourse provides a speaking position that otherwise would not be there, an opportunity to articulate the particular interests and concerns that stem from San / Basarwa’s experience as hunter-gatherers and status as marginalised minority. It is not speaking position that reveals the ‘essence’ of a subaltern hunter-gatherer identity, but a strategic location in which the San / Basarwa are positioned as vulnerable *victims* of state policies but most crucially as *agents*, who critically question their citizenship and the hegemonic development discourse of the state. This is reflected in NT’s proposed solution to implement the CBNRM policy in the

CKGR, which is true to San / Basarwa's desire to continue to call themselves hunter-gatherers, while actively taking part in, and benefiting from, development.

As long as the indigenous rights discourse is put to use in a way that benefits a given group in a specific context, the question of the concept's origin, Western or otherwise, should not be relevant.

The Bushmen

There is a fine line between promoting a hunting and gathering identity and framing a conflict as a question of reviving a hunting and gathering past. In my view Survival crosses this line and slips into reverse ethnocentrism, firstly by implicating a passive "Bushman" subject while awarding the real agency to Western activists as guarantors of human rights (and thus "civilisation") in Africa, and secondly by their tendency to brush aside the politics of development. As Taylor (2000) has shown (chapter 5), the San / Basarwa also desire 'development' and 'modernity', but this is neither a top-down process initiated by the state, nor a process that unfolds naturally 'from within' once land rights have been restored.

Survival's frame articulates the relocation conflict as any other conflict between an indigenous people and its government. It conforms to the much used convention of portraying indigenous peoples as "either victims or survivors of state violence" and predicting imminent assimilation or cultural disintegration (Warren and Jackson 2003:1). Such stereotypes may have the effect of cementing the antagonism between state / profit / modernisation and indigenouness / subsistence / tradition into a fixed relation of powerful *subject* versus disempowered *other* (Law 1997).

Although presented as concern over the objectification and racialization of the Basarwa as Bushmen cast out of time, critique of Survival from politicians and members of the public shows that the CKGR relocation is motivated by a feeling of shame and uneasiness about the San / Basarwa's continued presence in the CKGR. As long as hunter-gatherers continue to exist and identify as such, they contradict the narrative of Botswana's remarkable post-independence transformation into a well-governed democratic state with a developed, modernised citizenry. With CKGR as a tourist

destination, it is feared that foreigners –in the shape of spies, voyeurs and tourists (depending on their inclinations) will continue to project images of Botswana as a place of underdevelopment. The wish to “sing our own songs” is coupled with the fear of being seen -by the Western Gaze- as underdeveloped. In this sense, the Bushmen represent that which Botswana does not want to be associated with: the primitive and uncivilised, which needs to be purified and normalised. In the process of defending the nation against Western intrusion, the government is reproducing the racist assumptions it presumes to combat.

The polemic between Survival and the government has generated vast amounts of statements and texts with attacks and counter attacks, while the San / Basarwa, the protagonists of the conflict, remain conspicuously silent. “The Bushmen” is a position which exists through the representations and interests of others. It is a subject marked by its absence and silence; an eternal victim without any capacity to speak.

In the next chapter I will use the insight from the relocation conflict to reflect on issues of representation and strategy in the indigenous movement.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding chapter I will return to my research questions one by one to summarise the analysis, and finally make some observations and recommendations concerning the use of the indigenous rights concept for future indigenous activism in a post-colonial context.

- How do state discourses of post-colonial nation building and development articulate the San / Basarwa as citizens?

This question was the theme of chapter 4. Here I showed that state discourses of nation-building and development relegate the San / Basarwa to a position of subalterns, as a continuation of the pre-colonial and colonial relations of inequality and dominance. Hunting and gathering is a closed chapter in the history of the nation; the only way to become a citizen of the modern nation-state is to adopt dominant Tswana practices, to assimilate and ‘develop’.

The conclusion was that Botswana’s citizenship allows very little scope for San / Basarwa to represent themselves, whether as hunter-gatherers or as sedentary *Remote Area Dwellers*. However, I indicated that the last decade has seen some discursive openings, represented by the minority rights debate and the CBNRM policy. About CBNRM it was said that it holds the potential for San / Basarwa to negotiate their claims to land *as* San / Basarwa, based on the requirements that arise from their particular relationship with the environment and not just as abstract, generalised citizens.

- How is the global indigenous rights discourse adapted to the southern African context, and how does the anti-relocation movement employ indigenism to represent the San / Basarwa?

This question was the theme of chapter 5, where I dealt with the political processes that play a part in the transition from global to southern African indigenism. I looked at what “indigenous” means to southern African publics and governments, and

how this is shaped by the experience of Western colonialism. Next I considered academics' perspectives on San / Basarwa identity, and their recommendations for how it should be employed as a basis for political mobilisation. Finally I turned to the actions and strategies of the anti-relocation movement, represented by Survival International and the Negotiating Team.

I showed that Survival uses a global, standardised interpretative frame to present the CKGR relocation as any other conflict between an indigenous people and its government. The aim of the campaign is to persuade the Botswana government to let the Bushmen return to their ancestral land, where they can continue their hunting and gathering lifestyle. Survival's objective is cultural survival, and the means is international indigenous rights principles.

The Negotiating Team's frame emphasises instead participatory development, in response to the opportunity presented by the CBNRM policy for the San / Basarwa to mobilise for control over land.

- Which subject positions are established for the San / Basarwa through the relocation conflict, and to what extent may they be said to enable the San / Basarwa to speak as indigenous and / or citizens?

This question was dealt with in chapter 6. Here I will consider the subject positions briefly, summing up my conclusions concerning the potential of each for the CKGR residents to articulate their interests.

Agreeing to relocate is to become a *fellow citizen*, with the perks that entails; a residential plot, a bank account, livestock and easy access to government services. However, I concluded that relocated citizenship has little to offer in terms of participation and self-determination for the San / Basarwa, beyond the requests and complaints about infrastructural development in the resettlements that can be communicated in the Tswana *kgotla*.

The *first people* position allows the San / Basarwa to be strategically positioned as *victims* of a culturally debilitating relocation and *agents* who take their destiny into their hands by refusing to move out of the CKGR, handling their own service provision, and

participating in the formulation of a development plan that incorporates their territoriality and environmental knowledge. As ‘first people’ the San / Basarwa can continue identifying as hunter-gatherers while making their contribution to Botswana’s narrative of development and modernisation.

I also showed that the “*Bushmen*” reappear through the representations of Survival and Botswana politicians in the relocation debate, as a fixed, inert subject position, which offers no scope for the San / Basarwa to represent themselves, except as “Stone Age creatures”.

Indigenous Activism: Interpretative Frames and Issues of Representation

Poverty and Marginalisation

The Botswana government’s rationale behind the CKGR relocation – as an extension of the objectives and logic of the RADP - is the obligation to provide justice and equality for all: It is the duty of the government to provide development and the right (and imperative) of all Botswana citizens to be developed. Given that the stated purpose of the relocation is to provide the San /Basarwa with the same ‘level of development’ as other Batswana, the government responds to criticism with incredulity and self-righteousness:

In a world where Governments stand accused of many terrible crimes, it does seem strange that the Botswana Government should have to defend itself against the charge of improving the lives of its citizens. (Government of Botswana website, www.gov.bw/relocation)

For this reason I am sceptical to the recommendation that San / Basarwa’s interests should be pursued in terms of “justice and equality” (Suzman, chapter 5) or “poverty” (Taylor, chapter 5). This does not confront official policy to any radical extent, nor does it question the benchmark for what is just and equal. A list of needs, hardships and deprivations may be useful for the purpose of formulating policy objectives once ethnic difference has been abstracted out of the picture, but it does not challenge the hegemonic goal of assimilation. The discourse of poverty and marginalisation does not touch the question of what characterises the experiences that define the San / Basarwa in

contemporary Botswana and what the San / Basarwa may wish for the future. Given Taylor's (2000) study, which brings across San / Basarwa's self-representation as hunter-gatherers and local desires for development, I am surprised at his conclusion concerning political strategy.

A Global Identity?

The potential strength of trans-national indigenous organisations such as Survival International is that they are in a position to compare and analyse cases from a global perspective. By framing conflicts between minority groups and nation states in the abstracted meta-narrative of indigenusness, they can mobilise an international audience and put pressure on states to comply with indigenous rights standards as a moral obligation, irrespective of whether the state is a signatory of ILO Convention No. 169.

The indigenous rights discourse extends its power beyond legally binding conventions, as practice and communication among states and other actors (such as indigenous and human rights organisations) have resulted in *minimum standards* for behaviour toward indigenous peoples. This "pull toward compliance" is what produces new customary international law (Anaya 2000:49). However, the weakness of SI's approach is that it is oblivious to how local perceptions of indigenusness, democracy and (post) colonialism shape the organisation's intervention and the domestic response to it.

In order for the indigenous rights agenda to continue to build bridges and international solidarity rather than reproducing African-Western disjunctures, the different actors in the indigenous movement need to acknowledge the asymmetries of speaking positions and the effect this may have for how indigenous peoples are represented. The power to establish interpretative frames and invest them with authority is highly unequal (Moser 1998).

Mediating the Global and Local

The Negotiating Team's intervention has shown that pursuing indigenous rights does not have to imply an antagonistic relationship to the state. Instead the interests of the CKGR residents and the government are aligned through the mutual benefit of CBNRM. Instead of "incompatibility" between citizenship and indigenusness, NT's vision thus

suggests the possibility of a citizenship more sensitive to “alternative affiliation to territory / place” (Radcliffe 1999:233).

Diana Vinding from IWGIA (pers. comm. 2004) suggests that we think of the international indigenous rights discourse as a resource for analysing the situation of a certain segment of minority groups coupled with a possibility for seeking redress or improvement in their situation. As a global, general instrument ILO Convention No. 169 does not provide any specific answers or strategies, thus in a given context or conflict the local indigenous movement should be allowed to set the parameters for interpretative framing and advocacy, and guide the intervention of international organisations. The local should not be seen as a privileged perspective for framing or analysis, but as a privileged location for collaboration and dialogue between different levels of the indigenous movement and the government.

Indigenusness and the Post-Colonial State

The CKGR relocation is in breach of international law, the African Charter and possibly the Botswana Constitution (this is for the High Court to determine in the current court case). I have tried to find an answer to why a government that prides itself on its good international record for governance and human rights would stand so firmly on the relocation policy, in spite of scathing international criticism. I have done this on the basis of theories of the post-colonial state (chapter 2) and my analysis of the Botswana version of nation-building (chapter 4).

While Botswana is pursuing a capitalist economic growth strategy which reflects Western liberal individualism (Durham 2002), in the ‘inner sphere’ of community and culture (Chatterjee in Loomba 1998) the nation is given legitimacy through Tswana and African “indigenous” conceptions of human dignity, participation and democracy. Handling the intervention of international human rights NGOs thus becomes a matter of asserting national sovereignty in the face of what is seen as a neo-colonialist Western intrusion (chapter 6).

The Botswana government’s response to Survival’s campaign is an indication of the challenge of showing the relevance and applicability of the indigenous rights concept to the African post-colonial state.

Survival's universal interpretative frame, which pits an indigenous people against its government in a stereotypical antagonism, is unlikely to produce results given the reluctance among post-colonial governments to adopt concepts that are seen to emerge from a Western context, in the service of Western interests.

However, the African Commission's Working Group of Experts on the Rights of Indigenous Populations / Communities (chapter 5) has made a very important contribution in this regard, by arguing that protecting indigenous rights (as a subset of collective rights) is in the spirit of the African Charter's emphasis on traditional African conceptions of community and communal values. Similarly the Negotiating Team has shown how the national *botho* principle (chapter 5 and 6) can resonate with international human rights instruments.

I have deliberately named the subject position established in the relocation conflict "first people" as opposed to "indigenous people", as this better reflects its connection with the African context. As was said in chapter 5, the term "indigenous" carries associations of colonial and post-colonial submission, whereas "first people" is more meaningful to African governments and publics (Thornberry 2001, Taylor pers. comm. 2004). The relocation conflict is an example, and the "first people" position a symbol, of how global discourses are locally inflected (Ahluwalia 2001). The actors of the indigenous movement must take this into consideration if they are to meet the challenge of making "indigenouness" a palatable concept to governments and publics, and help make the post-colonial state more inclusive.

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